

Bashir, rebels agree to start talks

NAIROBI (AP) — Sudan's military leader and the heads of two rival rebel factions have opened peace talks in separate meetings with a mediating committee of African presidents. President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya said the rebels and the Sudanese government agreed to launch immediate talks in Nairobi on ending the civil war that began in 1983. An estimated one million people have been killed by war or famine since the fighting started. The United Nations says 1.7 million people in the region need emergency aid. The two rebel factions began fighting among themselves in 1991, adding more bloodshed to a conflict that has displaced millions in Africa's largest country. The mediating committee of Mr. Moi, President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and a representative for President Issaias Afewerki of Eritrea met first with Omar Hassan Al Bashir, Sudan's president, and then with rebel leaders John Garang and Rick Machar.

Volume 18 Number 5564

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جordan Times نشرة سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الرأي"

AMMAN SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1994, SHAWWAL 7, 1414

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Security Council condemns Hebron massacre

U.S. abstains on resolution's references to Fourth Geneva Convention and Jerusalem
Bilaterals to resume in April, high-level Israel-PLO talks soon, Washington announces

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Security Council Friday strongly condemned last month's massacre of dozens of Palestinians by an Israeli settler at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron and called for a temporary international presence to ensure the protection of inhabitants of the Israeli-occupied territories.

The action immediately bore fruit: U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright told the Security Council Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have agreed to resume negotiations with Israel.

"First, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have agreed to resume bilateral negotiations with Israel in April," she told the council.

Ms. Albright then announced that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had "finally agreed to convene a senior level meeting — the timing of which will be announced in the days ahead."

Ms. Albright made the statement during her speech to the Security Council after the 15-member body voted to condemn the massacre.

The resolution as a whole was adopted without a vote, after the United States in prior balloting on individual paragraphs abstained on two, including one affirming that Jerusalem is part of the Israeli-occupied territories.

Adoption of the resolution, after three weeks of bargaining and delays, was expected to help clear the way for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to resume talks with Israel on implementing an accord they signed last September.

The resolution does not say what form the international presence should take, but it would not include an armed U.N. force, as called for by the PLO, since that would require Israel's consent.

The resolution also calls on Israel to take action to prevent "illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers," including confiscating their weapons.

"We think we have achieved a great deal to bring about the resumption of negotiations," he said.

Also, he said, the Clinton administration had "set in motion a mechanism that would bring the Palestinians and Israel back to the table at an early time."

Mr. Christopher was referring to the Security Council resolution.

"If the sensitive language that prejudices matters had been in the operative clauses we would have voted it," Mr. Christopher said. "But since they are only in a preamble and since a procedure was developed on which we could abstain and express our disavowal of the language we felt we were consistent with our position."

All eyes were on the United States to see whether President Clinton gave in to 82 U.S. senators demanding the United States veto the clause calling Jerusalem an occupied territory. In the end, Ambassador Albright raised her hand to abstain, not veto, on that clause.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the decision by the three Arab governments to resume peace talks would provide "a strong impetus" to the PLO to get back to the bargaining table as well, and conclude arrangements with Israel for Palestinian self-rule in Jericho and Gaza.

Mr. Christopher said only

Following is the text of the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the Hebron massacre:

The Security Council:

— Shocked by the appalling massacre committed against Palestinian worshippers in the mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron, on 25 February 1994, during the Holy month of Ramadan.

— Gravely concerned by the consequent Palestinian casualties in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of the massacre, which underline the need to provide protection and security for the Palestinian people,

— Determined to overcome the adverse impact of the massacre on the peace process currently underway,

— Noting with satisfaction the efforts undertaken to guarantee the smooth proceeding of the peace process and calling upon all concerned to continue their efforts to this end,

— Reaffirming its relevant resolutions, which affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 to the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967, including Jerusalem, and the Israeli responsibilities thereunder,

1. Strongly condemns the massacre in Hebron and its aftermath which took the lives of more than 50 Palestinian civilians and injured several hundred others;

2. Calls upon Israel, the occupying power, to continue to take and implement measures, including, *inter alia*, confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers;

3. Calls for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including, *inter alia*, a temporary international or foreign presence, which was provided for in the declaration of principles, within the context of the ongoing peace process;

4. Reaffirms its support for the peace process currently underway, and calls for the implementation of the declaration of principles, signed by the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on 13 September 1993 in Washington, D.C., without delay;

5. Requests the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, to continue their efforts to invigorate the peace process, and to undertake the necessary support for the implementation of the above-mentioned measures.

Jordan sought joint Arab stand ahead of Security Council vote

Clinton contacts King

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Friday evening received a telephone call from U.S. President Bill Clinton. King Hussein and Mr. Clinton exchanged views on regional and international issues and the Middle East peace process.

The King also contacted Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and exchanged views with him on the latest developments in the peace process after the suspension of talks following the Hebron massacre.

In New York, Jordan's permanent envoy to the U.N. Adnan Abu Odeh said the King's contacts were aimed at arriving at a unified position on the issue of Jerusalem.

Mr. Abu Odeh said if the U.S. maintained its insistence on voting on a U.N. Security Council resolution paragraph by paragraph on Friday, this would signal a change in its stand on the Jerusalem issue.

Reaffirming its opposition to voting on the draft resolution as a whole because it refers to Jerusalem as part of the Israeli-occupied territories in one of its paragraphs, Mr. Abu Odeh said the Jordanian mission to the U.N. was alarmed by this and immediately contacted the government in Amman.

"As I have learned, His Majesty took the initiative and called several Arab leaders on the issue during the past 24 hours with the aim of establishing a unified and serious Arab stand to face this probable and serious change since the issue of Jerusalem is not only a Palestinian affair, but the affair of every Arab and Muslim," Mr. Abu Odeh said.

He added that resolving the question of Jerusalem in accordance with international legitimacy will be the cornerstone in the establishment of a permanent peace in the Middle East.

He expressed hope that the U.S. would change its position before voting on the resolution and take it as a whole, including the paragraph referring to Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories.

(Continued on page 5)

Israel, SLA block Lebanese road

NABATTIYEH (AP) — Israeli troops and their Lebanese allies Friday blocked the road to a village bordering an Israeli-held enclave in South Lebanon, security sources said. The road was used by guerrillas of Hezbollah to infiltrate the enclave, according to the sources. An Israeli contingent assisted by militiamen of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) set up a stone barricade and a three-metre-high earthen mound to bar motor traffic in and out of Yomhour, the sources said. Yomhour sits on the edge of the strip Israel maintains as a "security zone."

Turkey sends 150,000 troops to southeast

ANKARA (R) — Turkey has sent 150,000 more troops to the mainly Kurdish southeast before next week's Nowruz (new year) festival and municipal elections, officials said on Monday. It already has 180,000 soldiers, police and village guards in the area to fight Kurdish guerrillas seeking an independent state. Interior Minister Nihat Mentes said Anatolian news agency that the 150,000 troops would help keep order during Nowruz, celebrated by Kurds, Iranians and other people in the region on Monday, and the elections being held across Turkey on March 27. Mentes said earlier this month that an extra 50,000 policemen would also be sent.

Morocco bans mass march

RABAT (R) — The Moroccan authorities have banned a mass protest march planned for Sunday by 23 opposition parties, trade unions and rights groups, the independent Moroccan Organisation of Human Rights (OMDH) said on Friday. The march through the streets of Rabat was planned as a protest against violence against Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories and against Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. An OMDH spokesman said it had been banned for security reasons, apparently because police forces would be mobilised on Saturday for an allegiance ceremony in honour of King Hassan at Rabat's royal palace. The main thing for us is

Israel and PLO continue contacts

Rabin may move Hebron settlers

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Trying to get Palestinians back to peace talks, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin telephoned Yasser Arafat Friday and spoke of ways to resume negotiations, Israel Radio said.

There were no reported details of the 15-minute conversation and neither Israeli nor Palestinian officials could be reached for comment.

But the Israeli premier is reportedly considering moving the Jewish settlers in Hebron, the West Bank city of the mosque massacre, into one enclave as a compromise with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) demands for removing the 450 settlers from the occupied Palestinian territories."

The presence of this force requires forbidding the settlers from carrying their arms in the territories," he added.

The PLO ambassador to Egypt said earlier on Friday to arrange a meeting between Mr. Arafat and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

An Arafat-Peres meeting would be the first such high-level meeting since talks were severed after the Feb. 25 Hebron mosque massacre when a Jewish settler gunned down dozens of Palestinian worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque.

PLO official Samir Ghoshe said Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres might meet Sunday in Cairo, Egypt, but the PLO was waiting to see if the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution Friday condemning the massacre. Speaking in Tunis, Tunisia, he said Mr. Arafat would not meet Mr. Peres unless the U.N. resolution is passed.

In Tunis, PLO officials said Mr. Arafat had authorised Faisal Husseini, a leading PLO activist in the West Bank, to hold talks with Mr. Peres on a possible compromise that could get the peace talks going again.

One official said Mr. Husseini was to meet with Mr. Peres Friday. He said Mr. Husseini was in Jerusalem, but would not say where the meeting was to take place.

PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo said Mr. Arafat had no plans to meet Mr. Peres on Sunday.

"There is no plan for a meeting between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Mr. Peres in Cairo. The main thing for us is



Palestinians by a Jewish settler in the town's Ibrahimi Mosque (AFP photo)

Security Council split on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — A Security Council split has widened over whether to publicly acknowledge Iraq's cooperation with weapons inspections under terms of the Gulf ceasefire.

The United States and Britain find themselves increasingly isolated in resisting any statements that could be seen as praising Iraq for its significant compliance with ceasefire terms.

Discussions on the matter came a day after the 15-nation council decided Wednesday to maintain the devastating trade

"A resolution by the Security Council is one of the main indications for us to resume the peace talks, but also the way Israel reacts to this resolution, in providing security to our people is another indication," said Mr. Ghoshe, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, speaking on Israel Radio's Arabic service.

Foreign ministry spokesman Uri Palti had no comment. Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli-Arab advisor to Mr. Arafat, said the PLO was waiting for "practical measures for providing security to Palestinians."

Army radio and the Haaretz daily said Mr. Rabin was considering a proposal to reduce frictions by limiting the settler presence and moving them into one, or possibly two.

Then President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic signed a document linking the federation with Croatia.

"The agreements signed today offer one of the first clear

embargo on Iraq imposed for its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

No council member advocated dropping the sanctions during the review, officials said. But some delegations, including council president France and some non-aligned nations, want to acknowledge Iraqi compliance with the weapons inspection programme.

These nations want the council to give Iraq an incentive by acknowledging its progress in fulfilling some of the ceasefire terms. Iraq, oil-rich but cash-poor, says it has little

incentive to keep cooperating without such a pat on the back.

The division affected the five permanent members of the council with France, Russia and China advocating a change and the United States and Britain resisting it.

"There was no consensus on the formula," said council President Jean-Bernard Merimee, France's ambassador.

Discussions will continue tomorrow and "hopefully there will be a consensus," he said.

(Continued on page 5)

Bosnian Muslims, Croats sign landmark federation

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

signals that parties to this conflict are willing to end the violence and begin a process of reconstruction," said Mr. Clinton.

He promised the United States would aid the rebuilding of Bosnia, but did not cite a specific figure.

"This is a great day for Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also for all those who are opposed to war," said Mr. Izetbegovic.

The proposed federation would have a strong central government with power over defence, foreign affairs and economic matters. But it also would be divided into cantons, each of which would have a president and legislature and its own court system.

Strong federation ties with neighbouring Croatia would allow both nations to better negotiate with the Serbs, who have been major combatants in both the 23-month-old Bosnian civil war and the 1991 Croatian war.

Mr. Clinton said this agreement could not ensure full peace throughout the region so long as the Bosnian Serbs, by far the most powerful military group, are not included.

But he said he hoped it would prove the first major step towards peace. Adding: "it is the hope of all present today that the Serbs will join in this process as well."

The documents create an immediate federation among Muslims and Croats on the approximately 30 per cent of Bosnia not occupied by Serbs in the brutal civil war that has raged on the territory of the

Muslim officials limit entry to Aqsa

Jerusalem's Old City.

2 killed in Gaza

Two Palestinians were killed during an alleged shootout with soldiers in the Gaza Strip and at least 14 Palestinians were wounded in clashes that spread throughout the occupied territories Thursday.

On the coastal road in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis, a Palestinian reportedly opened fire from his car at a passing Israeli patrol. The soldiers fired back, killing the man and an Arab passenger.

An Israeli officer was slightly wounded in the incident, the army said.

They said the slain man, Mohammad Shahwan, was a member of Hamas and was wanted for attacking Israelis and suspected Palestinian informants.

The passenger in Shahwan's car was identified as Taha Abu Samih. Both were 27 and from the village of Bani Suhaib, Palestinian reporters said.

Clashes broke out later in Khan Yunis and the Jabalya refugee camp between stone-throwing Palestinians and soldiers. At least seven Palestinians were shot and wounded, residents and Arab reporters said.

But a police spokeswoman said the restriction was ordered by police for "operational reasons."

The 1,300-year-old mosque is a major tourist attraction in

(Continued on page 3)

former Yugoslavia.

They also include the principles of a confederation between Muslim-Croat Bosnia and neighbouring Croatia.

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former Yugoslavia.

There seems to be more of a glimmer of hope than there has been for a long time. Let us hope it carries on," Mr. Major said in Gornji Vakuf, which until a ceasefire three weeks ago was a flashpoint.

Most of the hope for peace came from the signing ceremony Friday in Washington.

Rabin, Clinton reviewed resumption of Mideast peace talks, not modalities

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Following is the official White House transcript of a background briefing given by senior administration officials Wednesday, discussing that day's meeting between President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin:

Senior administration official: Let me just give a kind of brief overview of what went on today, and then my colleague and I can take a few questions.

The president and the prime minister discussed a range of different issues. They covered all of the bilateral negotiating tracks, but there was a special focus that was put on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and also on the Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and overall process, there was a discussion about how you get things back on track not only with regard to the resumption of negotiations and the conclusion of the declaration of principles and its implementation, but also how you address the security environment and how you address some of the concerns that Palestinians have about security in the territories.

On the Israeli-Syrian track, there was a discussion — there was an agreement of the two that, as you may have heard in the prime minister's statement, that there's a window of opportunity, but the time is moving and time shouldn't be lost. And there was an agreement that this is the year to produce a breakthrough between the Israelis and the Syrians. And there were a variety of options that were raised and discussed during the course of the meeting today.

There was also an issue that the prime minister raised, which was really the Russian role in all of this and their relationship to us as part of the cosponsors and how that fits into our working together and coordinating to ensure that the process itself gets promoted.

Anything else?

Question: Could you elaborate a little bit on the measures that the president generally said ought to be done for Palestinian security; and when are you and maybe your colleague going back to Tunis?

Answer: On the second question, I can't give you an answer right now. We'll, obviously, be continuing with our intensive consultations frequently on the phone. Whether it makes sense to go back, we'll have to think a little bit more about where things are based on the discussions that we're having.

In the first part, there were a number of ideas — and I know this is going to surprise you — that I don't want to get into. There was a recognition that something has to be done about the security environment, a recognition that Palestinians do need to feel secure. One of the things that you heard the prime minister say is that Israel understands it has an obligation to ensure law and order in the territory and that has to be applied to everyone who is in the territories, the Palestinians and Israelis alike.

They are considering a variety of ideas to address the security question, and I must say that there was not a particular focus on any one. But there is a consideration of a variety of steps that they need to take and that they themselves are still in the process of finalising those. But they're doing it with some dispatch. And what came through very clearly was a real

— again, a sense of not only urgency that it's important to do these things, but it was also a sense that from an Israeli standpoint, doing these things don't simply respond to what the Palestinians feel that they need for security, they also respond to problems that the Israelis themselves see.

And I have the sense — I must say that after being in Tunis on Monday where I felt that we began to see a narrowing of the gaps on the substance, today's discussions also lend in my mind a further manifestation that the Israelis are quite serious about taking certain concrete measures on the ground. And I think that will help in this process.

Q: Can I follow it up just quickly — you said it wasn't a focus. That means a special emphasis. It's got to be one or the other. Either the United States did not specify things that they thought the Israelis could consider — ought to consider, or the U.S. did, so, did the president speak to Rabin of specific measures that he thought maybe Rabin ought to at least look at; or did he just speak in general terms that there have to be new security measures?

A: Let me make one comment and then my colleague will comment. Obviously, in the course of the discussions that we have had over the last 10 days or so, a variety of ideas have come up. In our discussions with both sides, on the kinds of things that might well contribute to changing the environment, reassuring Palestinians, and frankly, Israelis alike, on how to deal with the security environment. When I say that we didn't focus, the president didn't focus on any particular one, that's because there were a number of different kinds of measures that were discussed.

Q: How significant is the prime minister's suggestion of a Palestinian police force that would operate outside of Gaza-Jericho framework?

A: Well, I think that it is, I think, noteworthy that he referred to the Palestinian police who used to operate in the areas outside of Gaza-Jericho. Obviously, they operated throughout, but he drew a distinction 'because' in 'Gaza-Jericho, once you have an agreement, you're going to have a Palestinian authority. And the police that will be there will be under the Palestinian authority. In the rest of the territories there will be a negotiation to develop an agreement for the interim period. The fact is, until that takes place, his discussion of Palestinian police, who would be welcome, is one that is put in the context of them being in the rest of the territories but under an authority that is still basically the military government and the — administration.

Q: Do you think the Palestinians will go for that?

A: I think there are — this as well as many other issues are best resolved by direct discussions between them. And I would just say that it's very clear to us, based on the discussions that we've had this week — and it's clear from the ones we've had today — that the Israelis are considering a series of meaningful measures designed to deal with the security environment.

Q: In connection with the PLO and Arafat, when will be the next point of contact with the PLO? Will the president call Arafat himself? And is it correct that Arafat did appeal to the president directly to rescue the talks?

A: Let me answer the first part by saying the contacts are almost continuous. We are — I can say I am on the phone with him quite a lot. And so we're — it's not a case of having any kind of break in contacts.

Q: Do you have any indications or feelings from Syria that it intends to return to the bargaining table?

A: Well, I can tell you that when the Syrians and the

others departed, they made it very clear to the — and they announced it themselves — that this was a pause from their standpoint, not a break in negotiations. We will be going back to the Syrians at some point, and we will talk to them about what we think is the right time to resume those negotiations. And, at this point, we have every indication from them that they are quite serious about resuming, but we, at this point, have not really gone through and had a discussion on precise timing.

Q: Has the U.S. been asked whether it would be willing to participate on the ground in this temporary force, international or foreign force? And also, has the United States government even considered putting U.S. troops or civilians on the ground?

A: Well, again, what is in the declaration of principles is a temporary international or foreign presence — presence; I underscore the word 'presence.' There have been, from time to time, questions about who might participate. And there have also been a number of countries that have come to us and suggested that they might be willing to participate. What we have said throughout is that in the declaration of principles it's very clearly stated that the temporary international or foreign presence has to be agreed upon.

Obviously, it is up to the Israelis and Palestinians to determine the nature of this presence — its purpose, its rule, its location. And that really has to be the first order of business.

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Israel preparing to quit Gaza

OCCUPIED GAZA (R) — The Israeli army is dismantling parts of military bases in the occupied Gaza Strip ready to meet an April 13 deadline to pull out, despite suspension of peace talks after the Hebron mosque massacre.

Palestinians and Israelis said on Friday that troops had accelerated the dismantling of permanent structures in the bases in areas slated to come under limited Palestinian self-rule according to the peace accord signed last September.

Some facilities had already been completely evacuated, they said.

Palestinian witnesses said they saw soldiers dismantle at least two military outposts in Gaza City and in the southern town of Rafah over the past few days.

"They are taking down observation towers and moving out mobile homes from some

of the biggest military bases in Gaza City," said one witness.

A senior Arab official in the Israeli civil administration said authorities had already set up alternative offices near the Erez crossing point to Israel and installed computer networks and communications facilities.

The official said some employees were scheduled to start work from the new offices on Sunday.

"Israel is speeding up the evacuation of its governing bodies from the Gaza Strip," he said.

The Israeli army had been slowly dismantling certain military installations and preparing alternative locations for soldiers and its civilian employees since the signing of the peace deal in September.

But Israeli security sources confirmed that preparations were under way to meet an

April 13 deadline for withdrawal — should the government order the army to do so.

"The moves are to make it easier for the redeployment (of forces) as quickly as possible. We are moving unessential equipment," one source said.

He said the moves had not affected the army deployment in the Gaza Strip. Troops whose quarters had been dismantled, for instance, were now housed in tents.

"The (Israeli army) reassess (its) deployment from time to time and this is normal within the internal redeployment within the Gaza Strip," one military official said.

Under the peace deal signed at the White House in September, Israel must withdraw from the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho by April 13.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Israeli-armed' bomb found in Bangkok

BANGKOK (AP) — Police on Thursday discovered a huge bomb in a truck they had towed to their station last week after it was involved in a traffic accident near the Israeli embassy, a police investigator said. A body also was found in the water tank containing the bomb, police said. They suspect it is the Thai driver who was hired along with the rented truck. The bomb was believed capable of destroying an area of up to one square kilometer. Investigator Jirapong Jithampong said. He said it was made of C4 plastic explosive planted in a tank of ammonium nitrate. He said initial investigations suggested the target was the Israeli embassy, located in a heavily fortified compound in a downtown tourist area of Bangkok. Police said a man described as having Middle Eastern looks had rented the truck with which the bomb was found. The device was disarmed by police at a public park across from the police station. The truck with the bomb had been parked at the station since police towed it there last Friday.

Kurdish deputies ordered prosecuted

ANKARA (AP) — A state security court Thursday ordered the prosecution of seven Kurdish deputies who were stripped of their immunity by parliament on charges of Kurdish separatism. The court ordered them to jail pending trial. They have been in police custody for interrogation for the past two weeks. No trial date was set. They could risk the death penalty if convicted. Six of the deputies are from the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party and include its chairman, Hatip Dicle. Chief Prosecutor Nusret Demirel told reporters that Mr. Dicle refused to testify throughout his interrogation. The party is believed to have close ties with the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984. Parliament acted against the Kurdish deputies after the PKK killed five military students in Istanbul last month and Mr. Dicle refused to condemn it saying "military people are natural targets under war conditions." The Kurdish violence has left 12,000 people dead over the past decade.

EU sends aid to displaced Sudanese

BRUSSELS (AP) — A day after slapping an arms embargo on Sudan, the European Union (EU) on Thursday released \$560,000 to help people forced to flee their homes in the country's civil war. The EU's Executive Commission said the aid, including food, medicine and sanitary equipment, will go for nearly 50,000 people displaced from the southern city of Maridi by fighting between the Sudanese army and the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The EU imposed an arms embargo on Sudan on Wednesday. Officials described it as a political signal, saying that no arms have been shipped for several years. Most capitals froze trade with Sudan in 1989, when Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir came to power and installed an Islamic government. Egypt and Western nations accuse Sudan of harbouring and arming Iran-backed extremists. The United States lists Sudan among countries sponsoring "terrorism." The EU last month demanded that the government in Khartoum accept a ceasefire, saying that the bombing of SPLA territory hinders humanitarian aid. The aid is the first to Sudan under a three-year-old agreement between the EU and 69 developing countries.

Operator stops holidays to Israel, Egypt

COPENHAGEN (AP) — The largest Danish tour operator offering holidays in the Middle East has cancelled this year's trips to Israel and Egypt, because of tension in the region. Tjaereborg cancelled April trips to Tel Aviv, which would have been the first Israeli destination since the mid-1980s. Tjaereborg had expected 3,000 customers for the spring and summer Israel trips, but cancelled them Wednesday after a month of no sales. Managing Director Hans Peter Andersen said Thursday that tourists were frightened after news reports about a Jewish settler killing people Feb. 25 in a mosque in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Hebron. "We stopped our tours to Egypt because we considered it too dangerous as fundamentalists continually threaten to attack tourists," said Mr. Andersen. Two other main Danish tour operators flying to Israel have not altered their plans.

DEPART

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Talhouni to be eulogised

AMMAN (J.T.) — A eulogy ceremony will be held today (Saturday) to commemorate 40 days since the passing of Bahjat Talhouni, former prime minister and senior statesman. Speaking at the ceremony will be Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmed Lawzi, Lower House Speaker Taher Masri, Ahmad Tarawneh, Musa Abu Ragheb, Nasseruddin Al Assad, Kamal Shaer and Tawfiq Kreishan, as well as Adam Talhouni on behalf of the Talhouni family and Salah Abu Zeid as master of ceremony. The late Mr. Talhouni served as prime minister seven times in his political career. He died on Jan. 31 at the age of 80. The ceremony will be held at the Palace of Culture at 5:00 p.m. and will be open to all citizens.

3 envoys present credentials

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three-newly appointed ambassadors to Jordan are expected to present their credentials to His Majesty King Hussein soon. U.S. Ambassador Wesley William Egan, French Ambassador Bernard Bagot and South Korean Ambassador Oh Chung Il, Thursday presented their credentials to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan in separate meetings at his office. Mr. Egan served as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Cairo from 1990 through July 1993. Earlier in his career he had served as ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1946, Mr. Egan, received a degree in international studies from the University of Carolina in 1968 and later joined the foreign service. Mr. Bagot served at the French foreign ministry in Paris. The South Korean ambassador arrived in Amman earlier this month.

House to discuss municipalities draft law

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament will meet Saturday afternoon to discuss the municipalities draft law and an amendment to a law on insurance companies. The House will also hear replies by ministers to several deputies' queries and will refer deputies' proposals to its specialised committees. The House is also scheduled to debate a decision by its financial committee on the Jordanian exports guarantee corporation draft law.

Jordan to attend international parliamentary meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the 91st Conference of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) which will convene in Paris between March 20 and March 26. Jordan's delegation to the conference will be headed by Senator Ahmad Obeidat and will include as members deputies Mohammad Al Haj, Mansour Ben Tarif and Toujan Faisal, in addition to Parliament Secretary General Saleh Al Zabi and the parliament's Public Relations Manager Fayed Al Shawabek.

Baccalaureate schools regional meeting to open

AMMAN (Petra) — A regional conference for the International Baccalaureate Schools in the Middle East and Africa Wednesday will open at the Amra Hotel. The four-day conference, which will be held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, will discuss values and cultures from an Arab and Islamic perspective. The issue will be tackled at four seminars and workshops which will also discuss the history and civilisation of the Islamic world, subjects taught at the Baccalaureate schools and coordination between them. Some 180 Baccalaureate School principals and curricula coordinators will participate in the conference. They will come from Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Morocco, Libya, Turkey, Cyprus, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Britain, Switzerland, Australia, Scotland, China, India and the U.S.

QAI A closes Terminal 2 for repairs

AMMAN (Petra) — Queen Alia International Airport's (QAI A) Terminal Two will be closed for maintenance from today (Saturday) until April 25. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) sources said Friday. The sources said the tile flooring in the terminal will be replaced with locally-produced granite tiles by two Jordanian firms. They said departures during this period will be moved to Terminal One.

Renovations continue on Jerash antiquities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Antiquities Department has drawn a plan to continue maintenance and renovation works as well as excavations at the Greco-Roman city of Jerash. Director of the Jerash offices of the Antiquities Department Ibrahim Zuhbi said. Mr. Zuhbi said that in 1993, the department renovated and reconstructed shops overlooking the colonnade street and those adjacent to the gate of Temple of Artemis. He said the work was conducted in cooperation with the Italian Research and Antiquities Centre. The department has also discovered stone sculptures at the old temple which was destroyed twice in the first and second centuries, he said. The department's office in Jerash was also carrying out maintenance on important archaeological finds such as the mosaic floors which were uncovered in the eastern part of Jerash, formerly a residential area, Mr. Zuhbi said. He said the department has also discovered Roman cemeteries on the western side outside the walls of the city near Al Nasr area. In addition, Mr. Zuhbi said, the department renovated some rooms and the amphitheatre at the horse-racing arena south of the city. During 1994, said Mr. Zuhbi, the department will renovate the Temple of Artemis and the arc over its gate in cooperation with the Italian government.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition by artist Shawkat Al Rubai'iy at the Orfali Art Gallery in Um Utheina (Tel. 826932).
- Book exhibition at the Safeway International.
- "Permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibeh (Tel. 643251).

LECTURES

- Lecture in Arabic entitled "The Crisis of Arab Resistance to Israel in the Wake of the Settlement" by Lebanese Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Al Amin at Abdin Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- Lecture in Arabic entitled "The Horizons of German-Arab Relations" by Dr. Abediadi Abu Hantash at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

- Seminar on the rights of Jordanian women and children based on two reports Jordan presented to the U.N. Human Rights Commission and Child Rights Commission. The seminar will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:30 p.m.

DRAMA

- Drama in Arabic entitled "The Night of the Burial of an Artist" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

Ordeal of Indian farmworkers in 3rd month

By Suhair Obeidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Nearly 125 Indian farmworkers at odds with their employer in the Jordan Valley marked two months Friday of a crisis which found them spending almost the entire winter with whatever shelter they could find in the garden and garage of their country's diplomatic mission in Amman.

The crisis, kept under diplomatic wraps until now with hopes of an amicable settlement, is feared to mushroom and bring about negative repercussions on the traditionally cordial relationship between Jordan and India if Indian politicians get winds of the affair and manipulate it, observers say.

The workers are employed at the expansive farm of Mohammad Abdul Qader Shaheen in South Shoubek.

According to the workers, who are refusing to return to their employer until their demands for back pay and better working conditions are met, they are no nearer to solving their problem than they were when they fled their workplace and sought refuge at the Indian embassy two months ago.

They complain of "near slavery" working conditions and say that the employer is refusing to entertain any of their demands, which are: immediate settlement of past wages and benefits, better drinking water and accommodations and an improve-

ment in wages.

No comment was available from Mr. Shaheen. Repeated calls to the farm went unanswered.

The workers' version of the dispute is:

"Their wages are JD2.5 dinars for 10 hours of work per day. Part of the wages — an average of JD25 per month — is deducted by the employer to pay for their airfare to and from Jordan (JD600 every two years).

In addition, another JD75 is deducted annually to pay for their work and residence permits. Thus, the net daily wage is around less than JD1.5.

The workers say that they were not aware of such reductions when they accepted the job offers made through an employment agency based in New Delhi.

They have no proper employment contracts except those drawn up after they arrived here.

(Endorsement of employment contracts by the diplomatic mission in the country of employment is a prerequisite for the Indian immigration authorities before allowing workers to leave India. Apparently in the case of the Jordan Valley workers, that procedure was not followed).

(As a rule, employers sign an undertaking to pay the airfare as well as the work and residence permits for their employees while they obtain Ministry of Interior permission to bring foreign workers into the country).

Bad living conditions are another complaint of the workers. They say that they are given plastic houses, which can offer little protection against the difficult weather conditions in the Jordan Valley, and their drinking water comes from a muddy fish pond nearby. Most of the workers say they have severe stomach ailments because of polluted water they consume.

The employer holds back several months of pay from the workers so that he can pay for anyone's airfare home at the slightest resistance against the working conditions.

Dozens have been deported over the past years when they demanded improvements, the workers say.

Now, the workers are afraid that if they go back to the employer he would use the back pay to buy them tickets and deport them without settling their dues.

The workers have to work on the basis of daily wages; meaning seven days a week with no paid holiday. The employer offers them two paid holidays every year during 'Eid Al Fitr and 'Eid Al Adha.

The workers first brought their grievances to the Indian embassy in late December. The embassy launched contacts with Mr. Shaheen while asking the workers to go back to the farm. The employer, according to the workers, did not refute the facts in the

case, but only undertook to the embassy that he would try to improve the quality of drinking water available to the workers.

On Jan. 18, the workers say, they fled the farm after the employer forced them to put their thumb impressions on a piece of paper, allegedly a collective employment contract.

They have not gone back since then, hoping that the embassy would be able to settle their problem.

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"A solution has to be found to our problem," said one of the workers. "We have families to feed."

"We have come here to work and earn a living, not to stage a strike or live in the courtyard of the embassy," said another.

That much was evident from one look at the three-metre-by-three-metre room where the 120 workers are temporarily sheltered. "We take shifts to sleep," explained one of them.

The direct dispute between the workers and their employer is only one side of the problem. Other concerns are how Indian opposition politicians will handle the issue once they hear of it.

Apparently, the Indian embassy here has tried its best to keep the problem from the media. But when the issue is exposed, the Indian government will come under pressure from opposition to act to protect the workers.

"Ironically, then the ball will fall back squarely into both courts — that of the embassy here and the Jordanian government — at the same time," said an observer.

"The question is: Does the Jordanian government, or the Indian government for that matter, want to jeopardise excellent relations just because one Jordanian employer is unwilling to listen to reason?"

Joint Jordan-Egypt high committee meets this week

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee meets here this week for the first time since 1990 to streamline relations between the two countries following the healing of a strain caused by the Gulf crisis.

The meetings will be chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki and will include several members from the two cabinets.

Apart from political issues, the agenda for the meetings includes existing Jordanian-Egyptian projects and possibilities of future joint ventures.

Also determined during the meetings will be the volume of trade between Jordan and Egypt. In 1993, Egyptian exports to Jordan totalled JD 35 million while Jordan sold JD 5 million worth of its products to Egypt.

Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Mahmoud Awad visited Jordan last month and signed an agreement with his Jordanian counterpart Rima Khalaf on extending exemptions from customs duties for some of the products of each other.

The decision to resume regular meetings of the joint higher committee was taken during a visit to Amman in December of Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

It also followed an improvement of relations sealed by a summit meeting of His Majesty King Hussein and



Abdul Salam Majali, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in November.

The strain in Jordanian-Egyptian ties were caused by conflicting positions adopted during the Gulf crisis sparked by the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The joint committee met last a few days before the invasion of Kuwait, and, in the ensuing strain in relations, many of its decisions remained unimplemented.

"There is full agenda for discussions, including some of the pending issues as well as new ideas and proposals which have emerged in view of the progress made in the Middle East peace process," said an official.

In addition to a regular flow of trade, Jordan and Egypt also set up joint projects, including a maritime transport company which operates the ferry route between Aqaba and Nuweiba.

While the joint projects continued their functions without much hindrance, discussions on consolidating their activities and following up on a series of agreements



Atef Sedki in tourism, exchange of expertise and technology etc., remained frozen.

One notable exception was the implementation of an agreement to link the power networks of the two countries and a broader accord involving Turkey, Iraq and Syria.

The main focus of talks that Mr. Musa had during his Amman visit in December was bilateral relations with particular attention on reviving the joint higher committee.

"The state of relations between Jordan and Egypt has been abnormal but now things have been put back on track," said an official, after Mr. Musa's visit. "There always was a minimum level of cooperation despite the unfortunate differences caused by the Gulf crisis, but that was not simply enough."

Among the issues on the table for the higher committee are also the situation of Egyptian workers in Jordan and the status of Jordanian students studying in Egyptian universities.

Minister denies reports of Jordan-Israel maritime plan

AMMAN (Petra) — Transport minister Adeeb Halasa Friday denied reports about a Jordanian-Israeli plan to launch maritime cooperation in the Gulf of Aqaba.

Reports in the Israeli media alleging that he made statements about such cooperation are totally groundless, said the minister upon his return from an international meeting on world transport held in Crete.

The Jordanian delegation to the Crete conference made no contact whatsoever with the Israeli delegation taking part in

that meeting and the Israeli media reports are baseless and have no truth in them, added Mr. Halasa.

The conference, held between March 14 and 17 discussed transport and transit issues and international routes, especially those leading to east and central European nations, according to Mr. Halasa.

Reports in the Israeli media alleging that he made statements about such cooperation are totally groundless, said the minister upon his return from an international meeting on world transport held in Crete.

The meeting, added the minister, set up three committees to help settle various issues and topics on the agenda.

The first committee discussed matters of security and

Meeting seeks alternative to ozone-depleting industrial materials

AMMAN (J.T.) — Delegates from Arab and foreign countries will meet in Amman on Tuesday for a three-day conference on the use of alternative industrial materials to gas-emitting substances considered harmful to the ozone layer, according to a statement by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

Industries, including those in Jordan, have been using materials, especially in refrigeration and air conditioning processes, that cause further depletion of the ozone layer and contribute to global warming, said the ministry.

It said the 60 delegates to the meeting will also discuss international transportation of industrial materials and public safety precautions involved.

The statement said the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) is currently pro-

ducing substitutes to ozone-depleting materials and is supplying them to various Jordanian firms.

The JPRC has benefited from a \$1.8 million fund allocated for Jordan by the Montreal Protocol fund.

An international conference held in

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

جordan Times

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Smoke, no fire

THE BOOMSHELL that the minister of health, Abdul Rahim Malhas, dropped last month about the state of food and medicine in the country rekindled awareness and concern about public safety. For a while there was considerable hope that at last the government would do something drastic about unfit food commodities and drugs that our people might have been consuming. The heated debate that followed led to the belief that solutions to these problems were in the pipeline. Since then, however, the storm triggered by Dr. Malhas' shocking disclosures on the food we eat and the drugs administered to the people, has all but died down without any sign of concrete action.

This is not to suggest that there has been a deliberate plan to brush the issue under the carpet. The real concern is rather centred on the fact that not much has been heard from either the sponsor of the complaint or the government about the follow-up procedures dealing with the subject. All available evidence points to the fact that the quality of the food the people consume and the medicines they use are just about the same. A crisis of the size and magnitude exposed so bravely by the minister cannot and should not be forgotten so quickly by either the government or the public.

The least that Jordanians expect is updated information about remedial measures to put public safety first. Dr. Malhas himself is duty-bound to report to the nation about the corrective actions taken in the wake of his dramatic revelations last month. To cite one or two examples: Has anybody from the concerned authorities visited Jordanian farms to check the quality of Jordanian agricultural products, especially after several soundings of the alarms about the misuse of pesticides and insecticides? How about the quality of the air Jordanians breathe and water they drink?

Come to think of it, in spite of all the rhetorical campaigns to phase out black smoke billowing from motor vehicles, the streets of Amman are still full of carbon and sulphur oxides. No one can truly suggest that the number of automobiles polluting the capital and other Jordanian metropolises with diesel smoke has indeed gone down. We see such cars roaming the thoroughfares of the country with remarkable impunity every minute of the day. We have yet to see a traffic patrol issuing tickets to violators of the anti-pollution law in spite of the periodic noise that the concerned authorities make about their determination to root it out and the campaigns they started to do just that. Industrial pollution is also still on the rise even though the problem has been repeatedly highlighted by His Majesty King Hussein himself. All this means that the message about the dangers of contamination and pollution has yet to be absorbed by the national psyche, and until this is done we cannot expect more than random expression of anxiety and concern.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily predicted that the U.N. Security Council would extend the current embargo against Iraq for another three months because its members and the world community in large fall under the U.S.-Zionist influence. None of the non-aligned or Islamic nations would like a finger in defence of the Iraqi population who continually face suffering, hunger and deprivation because of the unjust resolution taken by the Security Council in August of 1990, said the paper. The United States has taken the decision to slaughter the Arab nation in all available means, and the embargo on Iraq is but one phase of its plot against this nation, said the daily. The Iraqis have implemented all U.N. resolutions and still they continue to face injustice as the world watches Iraqi children, women and old people dying due to food and medicine shortages. And as the Islamic World continues to help the United States and its allies to perpetuate the sanctions, continued the daily. While Washington condones Israel's crime at the Hebron Mosque and refuses to condemn it, it is determined to pursue all ways for starving the Iraqis and force the smaller nations to follow suit, the paper said. It said that the United States, the strongest nation on earth, is setting an example of immoral and criminal attitude for smaller nations to follow.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

Time that government, deputies started soul-searching

By Dr. Musa Keilani

JORDAN'S 12th Parliament marks the end of its first regular term this week against a heated debate over prospects for an extension of the ordinary session and an extraordinary session.

Quite understandably, the government wants an extraordinary session while the deputies want an extension of the regular session. And the motivations behind the choices of the executive and legislative authorities are clear: The government does not want itself to be targeted for parliamentary criticism more than the inevitable level that it has to take during the regular sessions, while the elected representatives of the people would not like restrictions on their deliberations and would like to reassess their role as watchdogs of the moves of the executive authority.

The catch is simple: If the regular session of Parliament is extended, then the deputies are free to bring up any subject they choose to for discussion on the floor. On the other hand, the government could restrict the House to discussing specific laws and issues in an extraordinary session since the Constitution says that topics for debate during such a session are limited to those defined in the Royal Decree convening it.

By the looks of things over the weekend, it was unlikely that the concerted campaign of some of the parliamentarians will succeed in securing an extended regular session. All indications were that an extraordinary session would be called shortly after the House concludes its regular term.

In the meantime, it would be a useful exercise for both sides to go on a soul-searching exercise to judge how far they have been successful in living up to the expectations of the people.

In my opinion, the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has managed to outlive all parliamentary manoeuvrings and has done a satisfactory job so far, given the extraordinary circumstances and conditions that characterise a budding democracy in a Third World country like Jordan. Indeed, some of those features were and are unique to Jordan, and we could hope to see more of the same as we go along. That is part and parcel of the experience.

The Majali government is unfortunate to have been saddled with several unpopular and controversial executive decisions, including the planned introduction of sales tax — which, despite concerted efforts by the government, continues to elude popular and parliamentary support — a draft law on the insurance sector, and other pieces of legislation.

At one point, it looked as if the so-called Malhasgate affair triggered by the startling allegations raised by Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas would bring down the Majali government if only because what it put up for public view was questions over public health and safety, an issue that has toppled many a strong cabinet elsewhere. The Majali govern-

ment not only survived that crisis but also managed to contain its fallout, much to the chagrin of many who were rubbing their knuckles in glee over the discomfiture over the government when the issue went on the floor in the domed Parliament house.

If anything, the endorsement by the House last week of the draft law on standards and specifications was very telling of how deputies would behave when it comes to decisions that would make or break a government. Unlike forces rallied behind the government to vote for the law with slight amendments.

"It is welcome news that Dr. Majali is contemplating a cabinet reshuffle to include some members of Parliament in the executive authority. This would be a very delicate task, given the nature of the structure of Parliamentary blocs as well as the postures of some of the independent members of the House."

Obviously the lessons that we, the electorate, have to learn is that moderate forces are gaining increased strength in Parliament despite the loud voices that we hear from some of the deputies who have not joined the leftist or Islamist camp despite being leftist or Islamist in thinking and ideology.

It is welcome news that Dr. Majali is contemplating a cabinet reshuffle to include some members of Parliament in the executive authority. This would be a very delicate task, given the nature of the structure of parliamentary blocs as well as the postures of some of the independent members of the House. Satisfying the demands of the blocs to the minimum level that assures him of sufficient parliamentary support is a very challenging task that confronts Dr. Majali. Any further comment on this would have to await the actual reshuffle, as when and if it takes place.

However, it would be very interesting to see how the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the single largest bloc in the House with 16 (plus two, if you will) votes, would respond if asked to join the government. The questions that such a hypothesis brings up are: Will the IAF uphold its ideological and political opposition to the peace process and turn down the offer, given

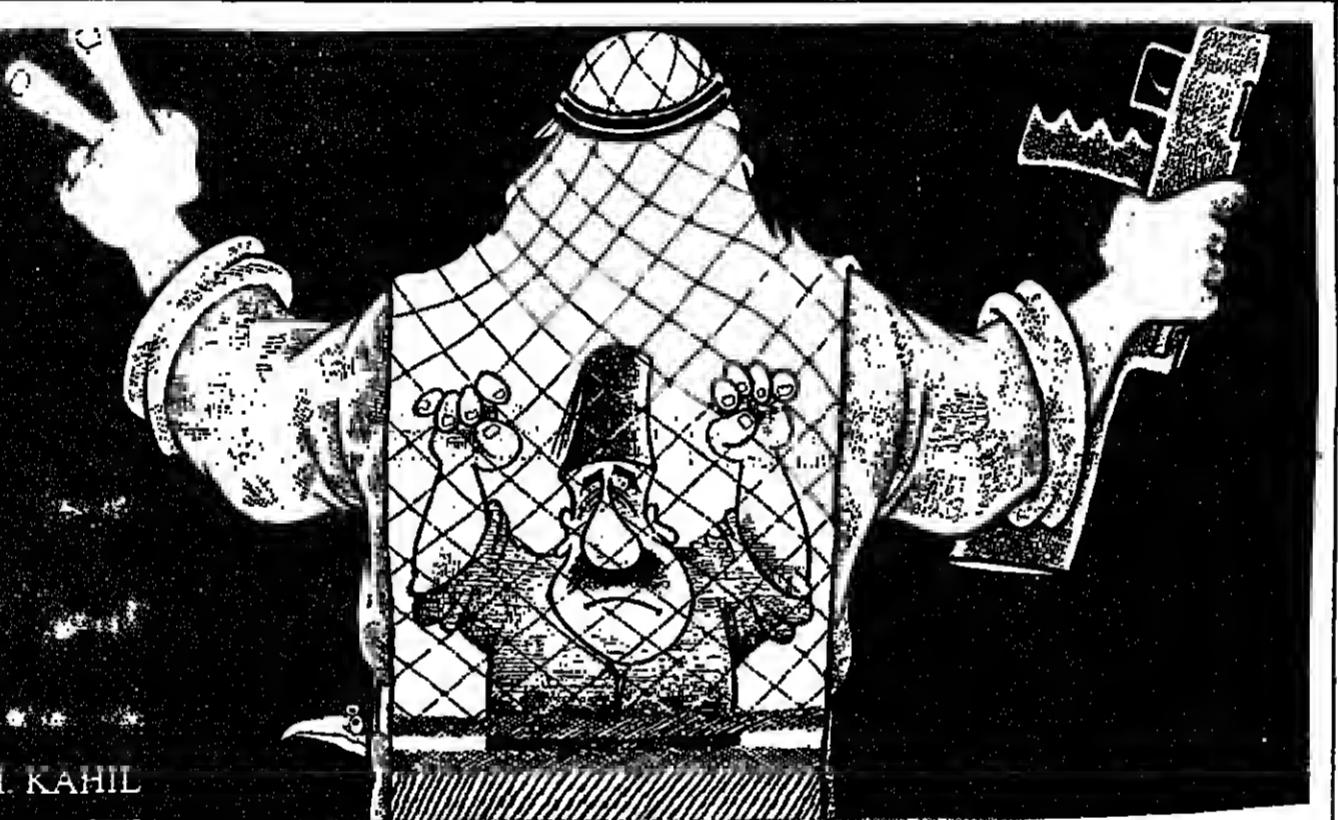
that there cannot be any retraction of the Jordanian move towards a negotiated settlement with Israel? Or will it decide not to waste an opportunity to reenter the executive authority and seek to work from within to bring about the fundamental changes that it deems necessary to serve its ideological and political purposes?

At the same time, the unproclaimed split among "hawks" and "moderates" in the so-called Islamist bloc in Parliament cannot be overlooked either. Whether the prospect of joining the government will exacerbate that split or unite the bloc is another question that should be answered if indeed Dr. Majali invites it into the cabinet.

On the other hand, one could discern an emerging axis in Parliament among three key blocs with a combined voting strength of 36. The ideologies, if one chooses to use that term to describe their approaches, and positions of the three are not much different. If anything, they have an overwhelming combination of elements in common than any differences. Again, it should be interesting to see whether 36 deputies could come up with a satisfactory composition of cabinet seats that would ensure all their votes go behind the government. When one puts the legislature's performance since November under the magnifying glass, the picture that emerges is not very colourful or impressive. Newspapers were not exaggerating when they headlined that personal dispute were preoccupying the work of the lawmakers to the extent that important pieces of legislation were being held up or not given the right magnitude of importance they deserved during the House debates.

The state of affairs in the House reached such a point that it forced His Majesty King Hussein to remind the lawmakers that they were veering away from their rightful responsibilities and obligations and overlooking many crucial issues. Interestingly, the King's words have had a jolting effect on the country. Suddenly we found government-run media chiefs coming up with excuses that they were unable to do a fair and responsible job without administrative and financial independence, companies announcing multi-million dollar projects to fight pollution, and journalists and concerned departments trying to address the problem of drug addicts.

Such a response to the King's pointed observations underlined the very shortcomings of our lawmakers since they entered Parliament in November. Hopefully, they have learned their lessons in the past five months and we could expect an upgraded, pointed and non-nonsense behaviour from them soon. That is the least they could do to live up to the expectations that the voters attached to their ballot papers on Nov. 8.



THE WEEK IN PRINT

Peace talks are futile under current formula; continued sanctions on Iraq proof of U.S. bias

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

QUESTIONS RELATED TO

the resumption of the Middle East peace process in light of the Israeli crimes against the Palesians as well as the repercussions of the Hebron massacre and domestic affairs dominated the topics discussed by the local Arabic press in the past week.

Commenting on the Israeli

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Washington last week, Taher Al Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that both U.S. President Bill Clinton and Mr. Rabin are determined to pursue the peace process under the U.S.-Israeli alliance sponsorship and to confront any moves on the part of Russia to hold another international conference to give an impetus to the peace process. We have reason to believe, in light of the U.S. behaviour, that the time has come for an international conference since Washington has proved to be a faithful ally of Israel and backer of its occupation, said Mr. Adwan. At the same time, the past two years of peace have proved that the Arabs have no trump cards to play and win back their rights, added the writer. He said that it is too early to judge the Russian move because Moscow has not followed its initiative with a serious campaign to hold the projected conference.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a col-

umnist in Al Ra'i, said that the PLO cannot guarantee protection for the Palestinians unless U.N. peacekeeping troops are stationed in the occupied territories.

It is clear that Washington is determined to see the PLO and Israel resuming peace talks in a bid to separate the Palestinians from the rest of the Arab parties involved in the negotiations, said Salameh Ekous in Sawt Al Shaab. The writer said that it is clear from the U.S.-Israeli behaviour that they are indifferent to a decision by Lebanon, Syria and Jordan to suspend the negotiations, but they are concerned over talks between the PLO and Israel because they believe they can impose their will on the Palestinians.

Sultan Al Hattab said that

there was no alternative for the Arabs but to resume negotiations with Israel and seek an end to its occupation of Arab land.

The columnist, who writes for Al Ra'i daily, said that Mr. Arafat, who falls under pressure to resume the negotiations at present, should cling to his demands for providing protection for the Palestinians but should not completely burn his boats so that not to close the door of the Middle East peace negotiations.

The writer said that Mr.

Arafat should negotiate a better settlement that would ensure an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, and ensure that the children of Palestine go back to school

and acquire education and live a normal life in a free country. Those Arabs who demand that Mr. Arafat pull out completely from the occupied territories.

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In the light of the Hebron massacre, the Arab masses are convinced that they should not resume talks with Israel unless protection has been guaranteed for the Palestinian people, said Mohammad Kawash in Al Dustour. The writer said that the massacre has clearly revealed the evil intentions of the Israeli government, which is far from being oriented towards peace.

Once again, the United States succeeded in forcing the world community to extend the embargo on Iraq and once again the U.S. administration is openly without hesitation Pretoria's commands to restore order in the conservative Homeland.

Bill Sass, co-director of the independent Institute for Defence Policy, said the extreme right had been taught a short sharp lesson by its abortive intervention in the Homeland.

"As far as the right are concerned, I think they will

try again and engage in this kind

of show of force... They don't have the weaponry and command and control to handle it," he said.

He expected "flag-waving to increase, the number of conservative municipalities declaring their loyalty to the Volkstaat (Afrikaner Homeland) to grow, and more 'occupations' of historic Afrikaner sites by white private

anarchists.

Right-wing Afrikaners are

demanding their own home-

land in post-apartheid South Africa. But the right-wing movement has split over

whether or not to take part in the end of April.

Pretoria sent in its troops and took over the homeland at the weekend when Mr. Mangope refused to guarantee free election campaigning in Bophuthatswana.

Terre Blanche's private army of troopers, some in camouflage garb emblazoned with his Afrikaner Resistance Movement's (AWB) Swastika-like insignia, were outgunned by homeland security forces they believed were going to provide them with arms.

South Africa's army, often accused of being right-wing obeyed without hesitation Pretoria's commands to restore order in the conservative Homeland.

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Features

Schindler's List - no thank you

By G.H. Jansen

NICOSIA, Cyprus — I will not be seeing the Spielberg film "Schindler's List," the film on the Holocaust which is not to be shown in Jordan, but is going to open in Cyprus in a charity premier on Monday evening, patronised by the First Lady. I will be staying away not because Spielberg's two last films, though hugely successful and profitable, were childish and sentimental and, basically, trashy, nor because the "List" is a "weeby" — a three hunk weepy evidently. No, this is a serious film, perhaps even a good one, so reasons for staying away should be serious.

I was familiar with the story of Schindler because, some years ago I read the original book, "Schindler's Ark," a much better title than "Schindler's List," one of the several fine novels produced by that fine novelist Thomas Kenealy, perhaps the best novelist writing today in English. That book was not a "weeby": it was, if anything, bracing and inspiring. And therein lies my objection to the film and to its buck-ground.

The film is part of the sentimental and emotional exploitation of the Holocaust that has been sedulously fostered by the Jewish state of Israel — exploited to the last tear drop and to the last dollar that could be extracted in sympathy for the victims.

I am not one of those who say, crazily, that the Holocaust never happened. It did, and even the word "tragedy" is inadequate to describe it: "catastrophe" perhaps, but not a natural catastrophe because it was a highly unnatural catastrophe. But just as unnatural is the exploitation of the event that was to become what may be called the "Holocaust Industry Limited," managing director Simon Wiesenthal, the Nazi hunter of men in their seventies and eighties, with deputy director Elie Wiesel, Nobel laureate.

In late 1980 I happened to be making the first of my periodic visits to Israel, which the Israeli authorities are, now making more and more difficult, when the industry was being founded, Eichmann had been, criminally.

abducted from Argentina and was in Jerusalem awaiting trial. At that time the Israeli government discovered that the Israeli public was not all that exercised in mind by the Eichmann affair and, what was worse, the younger generation of Israelis, when they were not bored by it, felt that the Jews of Europe who had meekly gone like lambs to the slaughter in the death camps, without much resistance, had been cowards. (A feeling they shared with no less a personage than Mahatma Gandhi who believed that the Jews of Europe should have at least offered mass passive resistance) Death camp survivors bearing their camp numbers tattooed on their left arms were roughed up by Israeli-born sabra youth because, by still being alive, they were thought to have somehow let down those who had perished, Israelis, tired of the exploitation of the Holocaust, which they call "Shoah," jokingly say: "There is no business like Shoah business."

The decision was then taken to launch a vast multi-media enlightenment campaign about the Holocaust, brainwashing really, which continues till today and of which films like "Schindler's List" for a part. The film had its premier in Jerusalem a few days after its world premier.

This location and timing is part of the widespread belief that, somehow, there is a linkage, almost a causal connection, between the Holocaust and the state of Israel: which does not, necessarily, exist. As we have seen, Israel adopted the Holocaust twelve years after the state was founded and as a result of the Eichmann trial and, of course, the Holocaust took place 50 years after the Zionists began their campaign to capture Palestine and to make it into a Jewish state.

The Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, was set up soon after the state's foundation and since then just about every visitor to the Holy City is wheeled in and shown around (us visitors to Delhi are taken willy-nilly to the cremation spot of Gandhi. But no great fuss was made over the Holocaust as an event till the Eichmann trial and the establishment of

the Holocaust industry. It did not take the Israelis long to find out that the Holocaust industry worked, is paid off, by producing favourable political and economic results. Politically, by going back to the past sufferings of the Jews in central and eastern Europe, it convinced that the Jews from there had to be found a home elsewhere, in Palestine for instance. And the tale of past sufferings diverted attention from the fact that creating the new state had reduced three-quarters of a million of the native inhabitants of Palestine to the status of homeless refugees.

Likewise, the tales of past sufferings backed up claims for reparations, which are still being paid, and it also softened hearts to produce generous contributions to the new state.

Little wonder then that a new large museum of the Holocaust has been located in Washington, improbably, because Jews were never persecuted in the U.S., rather the opposite, but, cleverly, because it helped indoctrinate the constituents of the American congressmen who year after year vote to donate millions of dollars of the American taxpayers' money to support Israel.

So much then for the exploitation of the Holocaust, cynical and sickmaking.

Yet inside Israel the Holocaust industry was a failure. It should have sensitised Israelis to the horrors of racism and racist violence which it has failed to do because, as the Hebron mosque massacre revealed, there are in the country groups of violent racists, like the mass murderer Baruch Goldstein, whose admirers consider him a hero and whose grave has become a place of pious pilgrimage. Furthermore, two weeks ago Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin tried to bring into his cabinet the Tsomet party that advocates the wholesale deportation of the Palestinian people from Israel and Palestine... shades of the mass deportations of Jews in Europe.

The second reason why I will not be seeing "Schindler's List" is its present timing. It is sheer bad luck for the film that it should be

released just after the Jewish settler Goldstein, with an accomplice as it now appears, gunned down over 40 Palestinians, including children, praying in the mosque at Hebron. A crime, a mass murder that the Israelis have tried to gloss over by ascribing it to a single madman when it is the product of a climate that tolerates racial intolerance in a whole sector of Israeli society. It shows that the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust have taught the citizens of the Jewish state nothing — except that they can get away with having not very differently from their former persecutors. Since the mosque massacre more Palestinian civilians have been killed by army gunfire than the Israelis say were killed in the mosque by the settlers: the killings are going on and on. They are quantitatively very different from the Holocaust but qualitatively and morally much the same thing.

Over which killings should spectators in Cyprus shed tears: over killings that took place 50 years ago in Germany and Poland or over killings happening now in next door Palestine?

The behaviour of the Israelis over the last few years proves the truth of Somerset Maugham's opinion, once dismissed as cynical, that suffering does not necessarily enoble and that it is just as likely to enrage and degrade.

Will "Schindler's List"

have the effect of impressing this truth on its Israeli viewers? Will it make them look at themselves and what they are doing: possibly but not probably. Yet surely, if Israel has enjoyed the benefits it has extracted from the crimes committed against Jews it should be prepared to accept responsibility for crimes committed by Jews on another people.

Spielberg is reported to have said that he did not know what the subject of his next film would be. Promptly the writers of letters to the editor of British newspapers suggested that he might consider making an epic film on the sufferings of the Palestinians. If he does that then the two films will be worth watching together.

according to one official who declined to be identified, entail a Red Cross presence in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as a way of satisfying PLO demands for protection of Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat summoned the PLO executive committee to a meeting late Thursday to consider the Norwegian-mediated proposals. But after three hours, the committee decided to postpone a decision until after the Security Council meeting, said Mr. Ghosheh.

Mr. Ghosheh said that under the present circumstances, the package "is unacceptable because it is a far cry from our demands for security and safety for our people."

Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin met on Friday for a second time since Mr. Rabin returned late on Thursday night from a trip dedicated to urging resumption of the peace talks in Washington and at the Vatican.

Mr. Larsen reportedly secured a pledge Wednesday from Mr. Rabin to remove some settlers from Hebron. PLO officials said Mr. Larsen had also gained Israeli acceptance of a proposal for joint Israeli-Palestinian police patrols in Hebron and joint administration of the town.

Rabbi Moshe Levinger, a founder of the Hebron settlement, responded angrily to the reports. Mr. Levinger accused Mr. Rabin of "insulting our forefathers and all Israeli history."

Israel has as many as 1,500 troops in Hebron to protect settlers and the army's presence often leads to clashes with Palestinians. At least 11

spots. The 450 settlers now live in six buildings scattered among the 110,000 Palestinians in Hebron.

Israel has rejected PLO demands to post armed foreign troops in the city. Mr. Rabin also is against evacuating Hebron or any other settlements before a final peace settlement is reached.

He has proposed Arab police be deployed in Hebron, provided they are under Israeli authority.

He told journalists in Rome on Thursday that Israeli settlement in Hebron was "stupid" and he was weighing taking further steps but did not elaborate.

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OPEC unlikely to cut output despite oil price vulnerability

BUENOS AIRES (R) — OPEC says it is unlikely to cut oil output targets next week in Geneva, despite the adverse effect such action is likely to have on prices, OPEC delegates and industry analysts said.

While nobody rules out a cut, the ceiling now set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), at 24.52 million barrels per day (b/d), there appears to be a lack of political will among key members to do so.

Failure to slash output by at least one million barrels could send prices at least \$1 a barrel lower, traders and analysts said.

"The market undoubtedly will come under pressure if OPEC does nothing. We are forecasting \$12-\$13 Brent," said Mehdi Varzi, who follows OPEC for London brokers Kleinwort Benson Securities.

London May futures for Brent Blend, the world benchmark crude oil, were trading around \$13.55 per barrel this week, up from a five-year low of \$12.40 seen on Feb. 16.

Although the low price has hit OPEC exchequers, some delegates contend that an initial drop of \$1-\$2 may be acceptable since they believe it will be shortlived.

"There is a feeling that given the recent rise in prices, a \$1-\$2 drop may still be accept-

able since many of us are convinced that prices will later recover from the initial shock," an OPEC Gulf delegate said.

OPEC heavyweight Saudi Arabia has not indicated whether it would agree to a cut in its own jealously-guarded quota of eight million barrels daily.

Gulf sources said that while the kingdom has not ruled out the possibility of a cut, pulling it off would prove politically difficult.

A war of words between Saudi Arabia and Iran, OPEC's second largest producer, makes a harmonious conclusion to the March 25 meeting even more unlikely, analysts said.

Iran fired the latest salvo Thursday when the Tehran Times accused the Saudis of overproducing oil and subordinating policies to U.S. objectives in the Middle East.

"I see very little chance of much coming from the two distinct strategies. There is not much chance of constructive dialogue," said Vahan Zanoyan of the Petroleum Finance Co. Ltd. in Washington.

Some OPEC delegates said the group may put the best face it can on a rollover by extending it beyond the April-June quarter, a time of year when petroleum demand takes a seasonal drop. The sources said

that by signalling it would not raise output in the third quarter, when demand revives, OPEC might hope to soften the bearish effect of not cutting quotas.

The expectation for a rollover is there, but now there's a movement within OPEC to keep the quota for the third quarter too high which would assure improved prices," a Gulf OPEC delegate said.

Some OPEC members believe that if quotas were held steady in the third, and possibly even the fourth quarter, prices would rise in line with demand, the sources said.

"If they want to rollover, they should do it for as long as possible. The best thing would be to hold the ceiling unchanged for the next eight months," Kleinwort's Varzi said.

"The worst thing OPEC could do is rollover just for the second quarter, then the market would infer that it would raise production in the next quarter," Mr. Zanoyan said.

According to the OPEC secretariat's own estimates, demand for OPEC oil will rise from 23.23 million b/d in the second quarter to 23.79 million in the third and 25.61 million for October-December period.

The secretariat reckons actual production in February, based on various monitors, ran at just under 24.9 million.

Saudis deny Iranian charges of OPEC quota busting

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia denied Friday an accusation by Iran's Tehran Times newspaper that it is pumping more oil than its OPEC quota.

"What the Tehran Times printed yesterday about Saudi Arabia's oil production and policies was merely a journalistic fabrication with no connection to reality," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted an oil ministry spokesman as saying.

A Tehran Times editorial accusing Saudi Arabia of overproducing appeared Thursday, eight days before a crucial meeting of oil ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Saudi Arabia is OPEC's biggest producer. Iran is second.

"The world oil industry and international oil organisations, including OPEC, do not consider the Tehran Times as a reliable source for oil news or analysis," the Saudi spokesman said.

"All specialist oil publications, organisations and research centres bear witness that the kingdom is sticking to its quota," he added. "Iran, in the opinion of most sources, does not stick to its quota unless it is unable to produce more."

ITU hatches global telecommunications plan

BUENOS AIRES (R) — The world's top telecommunications policymakers, including U.S. Vice President Al Gore, meet in Argentina next week to plan how to bring modern communications to the remotest parts of the globe.

The nine-day world telecommunications development conference, which starts Monday, was prepared by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a Geneva-based United Nations body that is ITU's telecommunications policies at its development bureau.

"And telecommunication companies have come to understand that if they want more business, they need more clients, and those clients are in the less-developed countries," he added.

Departing from the technical tone of other ITU meetings, this conference will cross into the realm of politics.

"One of our top priorities will be to try to foster telecommunications in the less-developed countries and in isolated areas like rural communities," said Argentina's telecommunications undersecretary.

The gathering will also pro-

vide ample opportunities for the telecommunications industry to showcase its wares.

"We're always on the lookout for business," said Michael Ritter, deputy director of Siemens Argentina, a \$392 million unit of the German electronics giant.

He agreed that ITU's hope of spreading telecommunications is not as improbable as it would have sounded a few decades ago.

"The cost of installing telecommunications networks has halved over the past decade and the trend is still downwards. New technologies make communications ever cheaper," he said.

Nevertheless, ITU estimates \$527 billion would have to be invested by the year 2000 to boost the world's "teledensity" — measured in telephone lines per 100 inhabitants — to 14.5 from 10.5.

Bosnia prepares to rebuild war-shattered economy

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnia-Herzegovina is preparing to rebuild its economy, shattered by two years of fighting, the head of its central bank has said.

National Bank Governor Kasmir Omicovic told Reuters in an interview that the authorities had prepared a series of 10 laws to create a market economy.

Mr. Omicovic said the war had wrecked Bosnia's foreign trade.

"Nothing is being exported, except for refugees and wounded," he said.

Once a firm peace is in place, the former Yugoslav republic will be able to launch its own currency, and hopes to join the International Monetary Fund by September, he said.

As Mr. Omicovic talked, signs of peace burgeoned outside. The pavements were crowded, trams were running again, and war-shattered Sarajevo was about to get its first street lighting for nearly two years.

The exact shape and size of the U.S.-brokered Croat-Muslim federation are still uncertain, especially what part of the country will remain under Serb rule, but it will be linked in a loose confederation with neighbouring Croatia.

After 23 months of fighting, industrial output is at 10 per cent of pre-war levels, and 80 per cent of the workforce is unemployed. Mr. Omicovic's deputy, Enver Backovic said.

Mr. Omicovic said Bosnia said.

most needed to restore its own capacity to supply food, water, electric power and transport to its people, then start putting them back to work.

"The economy has been extensively damaged. Railways don't function, but thermal and hydro power plants are quite well preserved. Damage to pylons, on the other hand, is very heavy," he said.

The new laws creating a modern banking system, capital markets, foreign exchange and trading rules and bankruptcy arrangements, could be in place in a month or two, he said.

"These draft laws are ready but we will be willing to correct any faults or inadequacies in consultation with the IMF and the European Union, as soon

as such consultation and advice is possible," he said.

A privatisation law is also being prepared.

Mr. Backovic said he was optimistic export industries such as lumber, furniture and electrical and hydro power plant machinery could thrive once again.

The economy was very export-oriented," Mr. Backovic said.

Mr. Omicovic said he was already discussing the design for a new currency to replace wartime coupons, which could be launched within a few months of lasting peace being achieved.

The new currency would have to be backed fully by hard

currency reserves and the goal would be to create a stable, convertible currency within two years.

An anti-inflation stabilisation programme would have to put in place first, and a number of "harmful problems" settled, ranging from a name for the unit to supplies of paper and coloured ink.

One condition for launching a successful currency would be membership of the IMF, which Mr. Omicovic said should be settled by the time the fund holds its autumn meeting in September.

Local resources were inadequate for the reconstruction of the Bosnian economy and so the country would have to attract foreign capital, he said.

Nigeria tightens terms for employment of foreigners

LAGOS (R) — The government has set tough conditions for granting companies operating in Nigeria permits to employ foreigners.

The internal affairs ministry said in a statement approval would no longer be given to applications to hire expatriates for jobs that can be done by Nigerians at home or abroad.

It said companies must now

advertise such positions within and outside Nigeria and listed an array of documents that must accompany applications.

It said Nigeria's policy of allowing companies to employ foreign experts was aimed at encouraging foreign investment and developing indigenous manpower, but the system had been abused.

"Most companies have rather chosen to perpetuate the expatriate quota granted them without making concerted efforts to train or recruit qualified Nigerians," it said.

"As a consequence, suitably qualified Nigerians are being denied the opportunity to participate in the economic development of their country, thus creating a situation whereby Nigeria is becoming a labour market for the depressed economies of developed countries," it said.

Honda tightens noose around loose white-collars

Zoe Wedd Securities (Japan) analyst Andrew Blair-Smith.

Under Honda's new programme, managers who fail to win promotion within eight to 12 years will be demoted and their salaries cut by 10 to 30 per cent, a Honda spokesman said.

"This is a response to economic reality," Mr. Blair-Smith said.

Japan's lifetime employment system has come under increasing strain during the cur-

rent prolonged economic slump. Highly paid but less productive older managers are the most obvious target for companies seeking to pare payrolls.

Car makers are not the only companies looking for ways out of the lifetime employment bind, but economists say that while Japanese labour practices are changing, they are unlikely to end up mirror images of those in the United

States.

"Have we seen the end of lifetime employment? probably," said Paul Summerville, director of Asian research at Lehman Brothers Japan Inc.

"But will it be close to what we see in the United States? probably not, because the cultural parameters are so different. You don't just put a bullet into someone's head when the economy is bad."

"Most companies have rather chosen to perpetuate the expatriate quota granted them without making concerted efforts to train or recruit qualified Nigerians," it said.

"As a consequence, suitably qualified Nigerians are being denied the opportunity to participate in the economic development of their country, thus creating a situation whereby Nigeria is becoming a labour market for the depressed economies of developed countries," it said.

roundings and make needed repairs which are necessary. Keep active and be free of boredom.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An ideal day to improve conditions at home, so discuss practical plans with friends and get their advice. Strive for happiness during months of hyperinflation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Recreation is best for you during the early part of the day. Don't start a new enterprise in the evening and avoid trouble which could come around.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make sure not to react bitterly to remarks made by a careless person. Study a new venture that could be lucrative in the future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Talking over mutual problems with friends brings right solutions now. Take steps to improve health and appearance and people will notice.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make needed repairs to property and possessions that will add to their value. Take no risks with your reputation in any project or problem will come about.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Contact good friends you have not seen in some time and deepen relationships. Avoid one who could give you much trouble in the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) A good time to plan for the future, so study your sur-

THE Daily Crossword

by Diana C. Baldwin

ACROSS

1 Hesitates
5 Screen star
9 Bungle
14 Yoked beasts
15 Above
16 Walks slowly
17 kind of cotton
18 Brake part
19 Cliff
20 Gold everything
22 Electrons
24 After deductions
25 Panels
29 Corporations
31 Self; pret
33 Plant pest
35 Character
36 Indefinable
38 Be present
42 Age
43 Old hat
45 Pine Tree State
47 Circular
48 Pin holder
49 Corn unit
51 It's big in London
52 Stop
53 Howdy
54 Ballet move
55 Star feature
63 Beams
64 Pastries
65 Ostrone Melody
66 Dumb
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68 Beer ingredient
69 Dumb
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71 Pantomime and Kennedy
72 Cain's son
73 Made cake
74 Musical
75 Production
76 In the future
77 Tear
78 Coriolanus
79 Crossword
80 Trivia
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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1. BIRCH 2. AUGUR 3. BABIED 4. VACUUM

5. JUMBLE: What they called the baker who sold them stale bread — A BIG CRUMB

Print answer here:

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumble: BIRCH AUGUR BABIED VACUUM

Answer: What they called the baker who sold them stale bread — A BIG CRUMB

Print answer here:

(Answers Monday)

Answer: What they called the baker who sold them stale bread — A BIG CRUMB

Print answer here:

(Answers Monday)

Answer: What they called the baker who sold them stale bread — A BIG CRUMB

Print answer here: </p

Seoul talks tough over N. Korean nuclear row

SEOUL (R) — South Korea and the West are losing their patience with North Korea, which has refused to allow full inspections of its declared nuclear sites, said are considering punitive action. Seoul officials said Friday.

"North Korea will have to act quickly if it wants to avoid international sanctions as the world is losing its patience very fast now," a senior government official, who asked not be named, told Reuters.

"It is time to apply sticks as well as carrots," he said, referring to Washington's approach in its drive to persuade North Korea to give up its suspected nuclear arms programme.

South Korea and the United States were also reconsidering their decision to suspend "Team Spirit" joint military exercises and were discussing anew the deployment of U.S. Patriot missiles in the South, the official said.

"U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher telephoned South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo Friday to discuss future steps," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

He said Mr. Christopher and Mr. Han had agreed that high-level talks between Washington and Pyongyang were now unlikely to take place next week as scheduled.

"The two said they would not abandon efforts for dialogue, but at the same time they agreed to seek new countermeasures if dialogue proved fruitless," the spokesman said.

The United States had agreed to resume the talks and suspend Team Spirit only if Pyongyang fully allowed the nuclear inspections and exchanged envoys with Seoul as part of an inter-Korean dialogue on nuclear issues.

A government official, quoted by the domestic Yonhap News Agency, said Friday that Seoul would now have to support any U.N. action required to force North Korea to end its nuclear ambitions.

The official was quoted as saying North Korea's decision to block nuclear inspections raised the prospect of U.N. Security Council action.

The West suspects North Korea has a nuclear arms programme and U.S. intelligence chief fear Pyongyang could already have a crude nuclear bomb. North Korea denies this.

After a two-week trip to North Korea, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.N. nuclear watchdog, said its experts had been blocked from conducting some tests at a key atomic site in Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang.

The IAEA said it was "not in a position to verify that there had been no diversion of nuclear material at the facility."

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam told Japan's public television, NHK, Thursday that international sanctions against North Korea might be unavoidable after Pyongyang's obstruction of the inspection.

CBS television network NBC reported Thursday that the U.S. Navy was keeping 30 warships, including two aircraft carrier battle groups, within a day's steaming of North Korea.

The presence of such a large armada could be a coincidence but it might also signal the importance the United States attached to the situation in North Korea, NBC News said.

Chung Chung-Wook, Mr. Kim's senior advisor on national security, declined to confirm the NBC report but warned the North that time was running out.

Mr. Chung told reporters that border talks between North and South Korea aimed at arranging the envoy exchange would take place as scheduled Saturday.

The North should provide a breakthrough tomorrow if it wants to keep hopes alive for resolving the nuclear issue through negotiations," the Seoul official said.

Meanwhile, CIA Director James Woolsey said Thursday that North Korea is developing 100 new ballistic missiles with ranges long enough to put at risk all of South East Asia, the Pacific and, it reported, Europe.

"We can confirm that the North Koreans are developing two additional missiles with ranges greater than the 1,000 kilometre missile that it flew last year," Mr. Woolsey said in remarks prepared for delivery at a symposium.

S. Africa's Zulu king proclaims independence

ULUNDI, South Africa (Agencies) — The king of the Zulus proclaimed himself head of a sovereign kingdom Friday and said his followers would "defend it at all costs" against incorporation into South Africa.

King Goodwill Zwelithini issued one of his angriest speeches ever, a day after ANC President Nelson Mandela called off what would have been a historic summit with the monarch.

"We are here today to proclaim before the world our freedom and sovereignty and our unwavering will to defend it at all costs," he told several thousand loyal subjects, many of whom waved guns and spears. His speech raised the possibility the KwaZulu homeland legislature would officially announce its independence, crushing hopes of its participation in South Africa's April 26 election.

The announcement was likely to increase tensions between the Zulu-strong Inkatha Freedom Party and the rival African National Congress and spark more of the political clashes that have plagued the country.

King Goodwill said he was opposed by Mr. Mandela's cancellation and dismissed ANC claims the black leader's security couldn't be guaranteed in Ulundi, the capital of KwaZulu.

Mr. Mandela had hoped to persuade the king to drop his demand for a sovereign kingdom — a demand that is perhaps the greatest stumbling block to ensuring free and fair elections in April.

The king has refused to endorse participation in the vote

unless he is guaranteed sovereignty to avoid living under ANC rule. The ANC is expected to score an overwhelming victory in the balloting.

Without the king's approval, it is virtually impossible for Inkatha to contest the vote. That has led to fears of uncontrollable violence in Natal province, which includes KwaZulu and which already is the scene of a virtual war between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha.

"We have reached the end of a road, and we are faced with the harsh reality that the government cannot and will not facilitate the restoration of the sovereign kingdom of KwaZulu," King Goodwill said.

"It is important that... all the Zulu people begin to promote and defend the restoration of the kingdom. We shall resist any attempt to constrain the forces of our liberation," he added.

Many of those in the crowd Friday were dressed in traditional Zulu costumes of fur and feathers and carried spears and shields. But there also were scores of modern weapons displayed, including AK-47 assault rifles.

"I think Mandela is afraid of being hated by the Zulu," said 19-year-old Baarteze Zulu. "Mr. Mandela wants to overthrow the Zulu kingdom. People will kill him if he comes to meet the king."

The ANC said it called off Friday's planned summit because of indications Mr. Mandela would be attacked if he came to Ulundi.

"Anyone who wants to kill a person of Mandela's stature... will

would be madness," said Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

The ANC tried to have the meeting between Mr. Mandela and the king moved to Durban, a proposal Mr. Buthelezi said was an insult to the monarch. "Do you see a monarch... anywhere else in the world who would travel outside to see" a commoner, he said.

Mr. Buthelezi said Friday he was not optimistic that a breakthrough could be achieved in constitutional negotiations to involve his Inkatha Freedom Party in South Africa's elections.

"I really wish we should have a breakthrough. But I'm not optimistic... There is no peace in this region already. I'm really concerned," he told reporters outside the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly.

He added without elaborating: "Personally, as far as I am concerned, we can still have the Bavarian option" — referring to Germany's federal system.

President F.W. De Klerk said near Johannesburg Thursday he had made a proposal to Mr. Buthelezi that would "without affecting the (election) timetable... lead to a form of participation."

Mr. Buthelezi has rejected the country's post-apartheid interim constitution and refused to participate in the first all-race elections from April 26 to 28.

Mr. De Klerk also said Thursday he was upset at a hardline speech Mr. Buthelezi had made to the KwaZulu homeland legislature saying war lay ahead if the elections went ahead without him.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shuttle Columbia lands in Florida

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (R) — Five astronauts returned to Earth aboard the space shuttle Columbia Friday, touching down in Florida after a near-record two-week science and technology research mission. Columbia touched down at the Kennedy Space Centre at 8:10 a.m. est (1310 GMT) after a 13-day, 23-hour voyage just 50 minutes short of the duration, record set on its previous mission in September. The flagship of NASA's fleet landed within sight of the launch pad where it blasted off on its 5.8-million-mile (9.3-million-km) voyage on March 4. The astronauts, four men and one woman, had a diverse schedule of secondary assignments while automated furnaces and sensors carried out 11 major material experiments in the open cargo bay.

News of first Soviet blast kept from CIA

WASHINGTON (R) — Even as the CIA was saving in the late 1940s would probably take the Soviet Union several years to produce its first nuclear bomb, the Soviets had already successfully tested the bomb, a once-secret document released Thursday said. Intelligence analysts predicted in the document, dated Sept. 20, 1949, that Moscow would not produce its first bomb until mid-1950 at the earliest, with the most probable date in mid-1953. In fact, the first Soviet nuclear blast had already taken place in Kazakhstan on Aug. 29. The explosion was announced by President Harry Truman on Sept. 23, three days after publication of the CIA's "intelligence memorandum 225." "The current estimate of the Joint Nuclear Energy Intelligence Committee is that the earliest possible date by which the USSR might be expected to produce an atomic bomb is mid-1950 and the most probable date mid-1953," the memorandum said. The Joint Nuclear Energy Intelligence Committee was an inter-agency panel that probably included experts from the Atomic Energy Commission, successor to the Manhattan Project, which built the U.S. bombs used against Japan, according to Stan Norris, a historian of the nuclear age. "I think it's a really interesting one," Mr. Norris, of the Natural Resources Defence Council in Washington, said, referring to the CIA document. "It shows that we underestimated their (the Soviet Union's) abilities."

Russia says it is still a superpower

NEW YORK (R) — Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said Russia cannot be a junior partner to the United States and it would be "politically dangerous" to insist Moscow play a subordinate global role. In an article in Friday's edition of the New York Times, Mr. Kozyrev said the notion of U.S. global hegemony is dangerous and unrealistic. "America cannot cope with every world problem on its own, and if it tried it would lose a great deal of strength through overexertion. Besides, even at this difficult stage of our transition, Russia remains a superpower — and not only as measured by nuclear and missile strength, but by its natural resources, technological skills and strategic geography," Mr. Kozyrev said. He said there was simply no alternative to genuine partnership between the United States and Russia and both sides must be prepared for hard compromises to make it work. Mr. Kozyrev decried what he said were Western threats to reduce economic cooperation with Russia, describing such threats as "provocative and senseless." He said Russia under Communism or nationalist regimes would be an aggressive and threatening power, while under democratic rule it would be peaceful and prosperous. "But in either case it would be a great power."

Russian duma fails to scrap CIS treaty

MOSCOW (R) — Conservative opponents of President Boris Yeltsin failed Friday to force a debate on whether to scrap the 1991 treaty which abolished the Soviet Union and set up the Commonwealth of Independent States. The move in the lower house of parliament, proposed by former Soviet parliamentary Chairman Anatoly Lukyanov, failed because only 179 deputies backed putting it on the agenda, well short of the 223 needed, 88 opposed it and 25 abstained. Although the motion in the State Duma had little chance of success it was another reminder to Mr. Yeltsin, now on a two-week holiday, that his opponents show little sign of heading the president's frequent calls for reconciliation. Conservatives and Communists oppose the Commonwealth, largely Mr. Yeltsin's creation, and want to re-establish a single state in its place, an idea which has caused alarm in other CIS capitals. Mr. Lukyanov wanted the parliament to reverse the previous legislature's ratification of the 1991 treaty, thus destroying the legal basis for Russia's membership of the CIS.

U.K. builder charged with 9th murder

GLoucester, England (R) — Police probing Britain's macabre "house of horrors" killings said Friday they had charged builder Frederick West with the murder of a ninth woman, 15-year-old who disappeared nearly 20 years ago.

Mr. West, 52, had already been charged with murdering eight women whose bodies were buried in the narrow garden or ennobled beneath his home at 25 Cromwell Street.

Gloucestershire Police said Mr. West, currently in police custody, was charged Thursday night with the murder of 15-year-old Carol Ann Cooper. She was last seen alive by her boyfriend in the nearby city of Worcester nearly 20 years ago.

The charge follows, the discovery earlier this month of a ninth set of remains buried in the house. None of the bodies so far unearthed has been formally identified.

Clinton aide called before Whitewater grand jury

WASHINGTON (R) — Another top aide to President Bill Clinton was called to appear before a federal grand jury probing the Whitewater affair as two other senior White House aides said they told grand jurors there was no illegal or unethical White House conduct in Whitewater.

A few blocks from the federal courthouse, the Senate neared an end to bitter partisan battles over Whitewater as it voted unanimously to conduct hearings on the affair though it left the crucial question of the hearing's timing to the chamber's Democratic and Republican leaders.

Close Clinton adviser George Stephanopoulos became the seventh White House staff member to be subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury on the Whitewater case.

A White House statement said Mr. Stephanopoulos' attorney had received the subpoena issued by independent counsel Robert Fiske. "I welcome the opportunity to give Mr. Fiske the facts," Mr. Stephanopoulos said, according to the statement.

The White House did not say why Mr. Stephanopoulos, 33, had been ordered to testify.

But Mr. Fiske is probing all aspects of a tangled controversy including the Clintons' involvement in a money-losing land venture known as Whitewater when he was Arkansas governor the failure

of the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, whose head, James McDougal was a partner in Whitewater and the suicide last summer of White House aide Vincent Foster.

The non-binding resolution, attached as an amendment to an unrelated bill by a 98-0 vote, stated that the two Senate leaders "should meet and determine the appropriate timetable, procedures and forum for appropriate congressional oversight."

It said hearing could cover "all matters related to Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Association, Whitewater Development Corporation and Capital Management Services Inc."

But it said the hearings "should be structured and sequenced" so as not to interfere with Mr. Fiske's investigation.

Following Mr. Nussbaum into the grand jury room was White House Deputy Chief of Staff Harold Ickes.

After more than 2½ hours of testimony, Mr. Ickes said it will become clear that there has been "no unethical conduct or wrongdoing" once the investigation has been completed.

The grand jury is examining whether White House and Treasury Department meetings involving Mr. Nussbaum, Mr. Ickes and federal regulators might have interfered with a government investigation of Madison Guaranty activities that could have benefited Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The White House did not say why Mr. Nussbaum, 33, had been ordered to testify.

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Sports

After pleading guilty, Harding must now pick up the pieces

PORLAND, Ore. (AP) — Her competitive skating career is finished, she reportedly is nearly broke and, by her own admission, her life is a mess.

Yet, there was Tonya Harding on the ice again Thursday, cheerfully practicing and playing with youngsters, less than 24 hours after pleading guilty to conspiring to hinder prosecution in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan.

"If I want to skate, I'll skate," she said. "It's my life, all right."

As part of a plea bargain, Harding resigned from the U.S. Figure Skating Association, effectively ending her competitive career.

Harding was grumpy when she showed up at the suburban shopping mall Thursday, telling reporters to "quit bugging me" as she walked to the rink.

But as soon as she put on her skates, her spirits began to improve.

She practiced a few jumps, crashing to the wall once and hurting her right knee slightly, but joking as she was helped up by training partner Angela Medina.

When the practice session ended, Harding stayed on the ice, playfully skating with one of her friends from the special Olympics and holding up a young boy as he tentatively

skated around the rink.

Harding said Thursday she'd love to coach, but on the surface, her future looks bleak.

As part of her plea, she must pay a \$100,000 fine, contribute \$50,000 to the special Olympics and pay Multnomah county \$10,000 to cover some prosecution costs.

A source close to the case said she has enough money to meet those requirements, but the payments will leave her tapped out.

Harding signed a deal with the syndicated magazine TV show "Inside Edition" that reportedly pays her between \$300,000 and \$500,000. But that money apparently will be gone after she makes her court ordered payments.

At 23, Harding faces few prospects for making money on the ice. She was to have been on a plane to Japan Thursday for next week's world figure skating championships. But her resignation from the figure skating association means she is no longer a part of the U.S. team.

Without her USFSA membership, she also can't compete in either of the two lucrative pro-AM competitions. She's free to participate in some ice shows. But promoters might shy away from her because of the taint of the Kerrigan affair.

Harding must undergo psychiatric evaluation as part of her plea bargain deal and agree to whatever counselling is necessary.

Harding admitted she conspired with her former husband Jeff Gillooly and her bodyguard Shawn Eckardt Jan. 10 to fabricate an alibi for the Kerrigan attack.

The session occurred hours after she had returned from the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit.

Kerrigan was struck above the right knee Jan. 6 in Detroit prior to the U.S. championships. With Kerrigan out of the competition because of the injury, Harding won her second U.S. title, USFSA officials have said Harding may be stripped of that championship.

Norm Frink, chief deputy district attorney for Multnomah County, took issue with a statement Harding released Wednesday that said her guilty plea merely confirmed what she already had admitted about her role in the case. He noted that Harding never had admitted to conspiring to cover up the plot and had never admitted she knew about it.

"The fact of the matter is that her plea is completely inconsistent with every public statement she's made on this case," Frink said.

Frink said there is "substantial evidence" Harding was in on the plot and said he was prepared to proceed with an indictment against her had she not agreed to the plea bargain.

Unfortunately, declarer also had worked out that East was virtually broke. Discarding a chance to ensure a heart trick by covering East, ducked. West countered by continuing with the two of hearts! South was having none of it. With the ace of hearts marked with West, declarer shot up with declarer's king and knocked out two sets of clubs. There was no way the defenders could get more than two heart tricks and two clubs.

The bidding: West North East South
1 Dbl 1 Pass 2 NT
Pass 3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of spades.

In yesterday's column we featured one aspect of counting. By playing out as many winners as possible, a picture of the distribution emerged which allowed declarer to take the percentage line when faced with a two-way finesse. Today, counting points was the key factor in bringing home the bacon.

We are not sure if declarer would have found a takeout double with the North hand after West opened one.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIA HIRSCH
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THE CANADIAN COUNT

North-South vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♦ A 6 4
♦ K 5 3
♦ A 3
♦ Q J 10 9 4

WEST
♦ J 10 9 8 2
♦ Q A 9 8 4
♦ A K

EAST
♦ 5 4 3
♦ J 7 6 4
♦ 10 7 6 5 2

SOUTH
♦ A 8 2
♦ K 9 7
♦ 10 9 8
♦ Q J 9
♦ 7 6 5 3

The bidding:
West North East South
1 Dbl 1 Pass 2 NT
Pass 3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♦

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with declarer's king and knocked

out two sets of clubs. There

was no way the defenders could

get more than two heart tricks

and two clubs.

The bidding: West North East South
1 Dbl 1 Pass 2 NT
Pass 3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♦

In yesterday's column we fea-

tured one aspect of counting. By

playing out as many winners as

possible, a picture of the dis-

tribution emerged which al-

lowed declarer to take the

percentage line when faced

with a two-way finesse. Today,

counting points was the key

factor in bringing home the

bacon.

We are not sure if declarer

would have

found a takeout double with

the North hand after West opened one.

Unfortunately, declarer also had

worked out that East was virtually

broke. Discarding a chance to

ensure a heart trick by covering

East, ducked. West countered by

continuing with the two of hearts!

South was having none of it.

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U.S. urges Russia to scrap its chemical arms following deal with NATO

MOSCOW (Agencies) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry urged Russia on Friday to go ahead with the destruction of its chemical and biological weapons and offered American expertise in the difficult task.

Winding up a two-day visit, Mr. Perry praised Russia's agreement to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) "Partnership for Peace" with Eastern European and former Soviet states.

"It will be more successful and meaningful with Russia joining," he said of Moscow's promise on Thursday that it will be ready this month to sign up to the East-West programme of peacekeeping and other joint efforts.

Mr. Perry and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told reporters after a meeting that they discussed Moscow's stockpile of chemical and biological arms and agreements between the two countries to destroy the weapons.

The United States is in the process of destroying its own chemical and biological agents under stringent controls. The two men said the issue of Russian weapons would be taken up further at a meeting expected to take place in Washington in June.

"I raised to the prime minister the importance we attach to getting rid of the chemical weapons and the biological weapons and having satisfactory means of confirming that that has been done," Mr. Perry told reporters later.

"I also offered him assistance in the area of getting those facilities closed down and cleaned up," he said. "He was thankful for that offer of assistance."

Mr. Perry is on a week-long trip during which he will also visit Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus to improve bilateral ties and encourage democratic and market reforms.

He said Washington was

already helping Russia with money and advice on how to destroy its chemical weapons and was ready to do the same with biological arms.

Mr. Perry, travelling behind the former iron curtain for the first time since he took office in February, expressed delight at the decision by Europe's most powerful military force to join NATO's new Partnership for Peace plan.

"Russia is a great power. They will play a very special role in the partnership for peace," he told reporters at a brief joint press conference with Mr. Chernomyrdin.

"This would be a major event in NATO," Perry said in response to questions.

"We deliberately will not put any conditions (on membership). I don't think this represents backing down," Mr. Chernomyrdin said, referring to Russia's previous position that it must be given special status in the partnership.

At least 12 other countries have already signed up to the programme, under which Eastern European and former Soviet states will forge closer military ties with NATO countries but would not be full members of the alliance.

The allies have been anxiously courting Russia, which had criticised the partnership and warned NATO against giving other former Soviet states full membership.

Before flying to the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata later on Friday, Mr. Perry signed an agreement promising another \$20 million in "defence conversion" funds from Washington to help change the vast Soviet arms industry to commercial production and retrain its workers.

The money is part of more than \$1 billion which the United States has pledged to Russia and other former Soviet states for defence conversion, the destruction of nuclear arms

and building housing for tens of thousands of former Russian troops.

In a surprise announcement following an hour long meeting with Perry, Pavel Grachev, Russia's defence minister, said final details of the proposal to join NATO are being worked out.

"At the end of this month we will be ready," General Grachev said.

The question of how such an alliance might work took on concrete form in the meeting as Mr. Perry and Gen. Grachev discussed Russian participation in the peacekeeping effort in Bosnia.

"We agreed to work together as equal partners with the Bosnians, the Croats, and the Muslims to work towards peace," Mr. Perry said.

In the State Duma, the more powerful of the two legislative branches, the partnership got a less favourable review in a daylong hearing of committee leaders Thursday.

"We have botched it," said Vladimir Petrovich Lukin, chairman of the committee for international affairs. "It can only be described as dictating conditions to others."

Mr. Lukin, who is considered a Russian reformer, said that it partnership is a compromise, "it reminds me of a compromise of a rapist" who offers his victim the choice between cooperation and violence.

During the debate, one of Gen. Grachev's deputies, Pavel Zolotarev, acknowledged Russia occupies an "unfavourable geopolitical environment," but risks isolation if it spurns the partnership.

"We shall thus be playing a role of outside observer of the political process in Europe, whose opinion would be given less and less heed," Mr. Zolotarev said. As a member of the partnership, he said, Russia would have "greater freedom of movement in promoting national interests."

The peace process, as it stood after the (Feb. 9) Cairo



Palestinian children playing with toy guns push a handicapped man on a street in Gaza City (AP photo)

Palestinians in occupied lands oppose return to talks

By Marian M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

— At the U.N. Security Council prepared to vote on a resolution condemning the Feb. 25 massacre in Hebron by a Jewish settler, most Palestinians living under Israeli occupation said they strongly opposed the return of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to autonomy talks with Israel.

Many Fatah loyalists and

opposition groups alike said the PLO should not return to the negotiating table before major and practical steps are taken by the occupation authorities to ensure increased security of the Palestinian population, speed up the autonomy process and curb restrictions on movement of people inside the occupied territories and East Jerusalem.

A leading member of the Palestinian negotiating team said: "These are not 'demands' anymore. They are necessities to keep the people believing and supporting the peace process. The Israelis and Americans must realise that."

"The peace process, as it

stood after the (Feb. 9) Cairo

agreement, was like an aged man waiting to die. After Hebron that man died. The Israelis must now realise that giving us bread crumbs instead of slices of bread to eventually make a loaf unacceptable. The approach will backfire and then both Israel and the PLO will suffer dearly," said the Palestinian negotiator, predicting Hamas-led violence against both Israel and pro-peace talks Palestinians.

"I don't believe that Hamas has more than 15 per cent of the 'popular' support as a party, but if things don't change they will lead the masses to a war fuelled by despair and hopelessness," added the negotiator, who preferred anonymity.

Spokesmen of parties opposed to the Oslo agreement, like the Palestine People's Party (PPP), maintain that the framework of the Oslo-Cairo agreements is the underlying reason for the opposition to a return to the talks. "The Hebron massacre set the tone for the talks. The Hebron massacre and then loose an outrage and dissatisfaction that began with the Oslo-Cairo agreements," says former peace negotiator and PPP spokesman Ghassan Khatib.

"On the ground, here in the occupied territories, many things are not only standing still since Oslo but moving backwards and we, the Palestinians, should not agree to return to talks that have become a smokescreen for Israeli designs to further usurp our lands and curtail the declaration of principles," said Mr. Khatib.

Mr. Khatib, who also

heads the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC), says that the continued expansion of settlements in the occupied territories is as much as issue that is "immediate" as security of the population.

"To address the security issue alone is not comprehensive enough. The security issue should not be used as a means to sideline the other equally important issues," he added.

Even after Eid Al Fitr,

however, all political groupings in the occupied territories continued to make protests against the massacre the focus of their anti-occupation activities. Demonstrations in Ramallah and Bir Zeit drew several thousand students on Thursday.

"There is evidence of 'active discontent' among Iranians who are suffering real deprivation, he said, citing sporadic riots since 1992. The most recent riot occurred last month in the southeastern city of Zahedan, reportedly between Iran's Shi'ite Muslim majority and Sunni Muslim minority.

"If there is going to be a civil

war, it's going to be between the modernisers, in Iranian terms the liberals who support Rafsanjani, and the conservative right" led by Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Mr. Wyllie said.

(Continued on page 3)

Jane's report: Iran near brink of collapse

LONDON (AP) — Iran appears near the brink of collapse as a viable sovereign state and could become engulfed in civil unrest, according to Jane's intelligence review.

"At no point since the early days of the revolution has the political, economic and social condition of Iran been so fragile," wrote James Wyllie of the University of Aberdeen, a security specialist who focuses on the Middle East.

Since Iran's Muslim fundamentalist government took power in a 1979 revolution, then fought a brutal eight-year war with Iraq, there has been constant speculation about its stability.

While other Middle East experts agreed that a political crisis was brewing, they were divided about whether civil strife is possible and virtually all ruled out a civil war. One dismissed the prediction of Iran's collapse as "a lot of wishful thinking."

In an article entitled "Iran — the edge of the precipice," which was made available Friday to the Associated Press, Mr. Wyllie said the desperate state of the economy and political factionalism were putting "unprecedented strains" on the fabric of the country.

"Iran is in a parlous condition and there is a prospect of civil collapse," he wrote.

Mr. Wyllie said President Hashemi Rafsanjani's economic liberalisation programme has failed to rescue the economy. Oil prices are about half the \$30 a barrel the government had banked on. The Iranian rial has been devalued 25 per cent, and the government is reportedly up to \$10 billion behind on debt repayment.

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COLUMN

Clinton stars in anti-violence ads

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bill Clinton the president and Bill Clinton the parent unveiled a series of public service announcements for radio and TV in which he urges Americans to do more to fight violent crime. But he did not take a stand on whether television should cut back on violence.

"As a parent, I want this violence to stop. As your president, I'm committed to ending it," Mr. Clinton says in the ads. One TV spot begins with 14-year-old Alicia Brown, a Washington, D.C., eighth-grader who tells viewers that a fun-filled Friday night turned to tragedy when her friend was shot to death. Mr. Clinton, standing with his hands on her shoulders, tells viewers: "Unfortunately, Alicia's story is all too common... We must give Alicia, and all our children, back their childhood."

Five friends of Alicia had been killed at the time of the filming. She was leaving Thursday's announcement early to attend a funeral for a sixth friend. "Guns have been a part of my life since the age of 12," the youngster said at Thursday's unveiling ceremony. "I know how important it is for me to be here, because last week my classmate was shot down... We need to stop seeing our friends killed. This is real."

Mr. Clinton, whose daughter Chelsea is 14, spoke after Alicia and told a crowd to the old executive office building: "I can tell you, as the father of a teenager, every teenager in the country talks about this issue at home at night, discusses it over the dinner table, is concerned about it, worries about whether they're going to have friends that are going to fall victim to crime."

Akihito to visit U.S. in June

TOKYO (R) — Japan announced Friday that Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko would visit the United States in June but there was no official word on reports Pearl Harbour would be on the itinerary. The emperor's two-week visit would begin on June 10 but details had not been finalised, the Foreign Ministry said. "I am certain that his trip will strengthen our traditional wide-ranging friendship with the United States..." Prime Minister Moritomo Hosokawa said in a statement. "I find this a joyous event and I am sure our fellow citizens agree."

They said the crackdown came in response to a call for a ban on the movie by Sheikh Saeed Shaaban, leader of the Sunni Muslim fundamentalist group Al Tawheed.

Sheikh Shaaban maintained the film is upsetting to Muslims, the sources said.

Mr. Imam, the actor, has taken a strong stand against Muslim fundamentalists, especially their opinion that mainstream cinema and arts violate Islamic law.

Three years ago, he insisted on performing one of his plays in Assuit, an extremist stronghold in Egypt, despite threats to his life.

During filming of "The Terrorist" police protection was provided for key actors. According to most Egyptian critics, the film is the harshest ever made on the subject of religious extremism.

"The Terrorist" opened in Lebanon, Egypt and other Arab countries on Sunday.

Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city with a predominantly Sunni population of 800,000 is 80 kilometres north of Beirut.

Greece announces new law on entertainment

ATHENS (AP) — Athens had an early night Wednesday as a new law restricting club hours and the entry of minors went into effect. The law imposed a 2:00 a.m. closing time on thousands of clubs, bars and nightclubs throughout the country and restricts people under 17 from entering without a parent or guardian. The new hours also apply to restaurants.

It replaces previous legislation that allowed places of entertainment to set their own hours. Although the law restricts entry to minors it does not impose a drinking age. In Greece people of all ages are allowed to purchase alcohol.

Public Order Minister Stelios Papathemelis said he drafted the law to cut down on crime and to increase worker productivity. "I think people should have fun during normal hours," he said.

Bill Bergquist, a U.N. official heading the anti-cholera campaign, acknowledged complaints from some Somali health workers that the world body may have been slow to respond to the outbreak.

"I think we probably were a little slow to react initially, but I think we've got our act together now and I think we'll do a better job in the future," Mr. Bergquist said.

The U.N. mission in Somalia and the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, the International Red Cross and other aid groups have mobilised to combat the disease. Mr. Bergquist said.

Suspects held in Jounieh church blast

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A number of suspects have been arrested in connection with a church bombing that killed 10 worshippers three weeks ago and revived memories of the country's civil war.

A police statement said Friday that the suspects had been turned over to examining Magistrate Joseph Freiha and charged in connection with the Feb. 27 bombing, in which 60 people were wounded.

The statement did not give the names, affiliation or number of those in custody. But it said Mr. Freiha had issued arrest warrants for a number of others implicated in the blast, which ripped through the Maronite Catholic church of Notre Dame de la Délivrance during Sunday's sacrament.

The names and numbers of the fugitives also were withheld.

The police statement was the first official confirmation of arrests made in a widespread army crackdown, mounted after the bombings.

The explosion triggered a rash of bombing scares at schools, churches, mosques and cinemas in Beirut and its suburbs.

It also jolted government efforts to dispel the terrorist image Beirut acquired during

the 1975-1990 civil war and encourage foreign investment to rebuild Lebanon.

The latest suspect was among 127 arrested earlier in connection with the church bombing.

In Lebanon suspects are detained as part of an investigation without arrest warrants.

After interrogation and further investigation by a judge, the judge then either orders their release or issues an arrest warrant to pave the way for putting them on trial.

The judiciary sources said some of the detained suspects have confessed to Judge Freiha that they took part in the bombing of the church near the port of Jounieh.

The sources gave no further details, saying the "secret" investigation was continuing.

The Lebanon army and police have launched a dragnet in the wake of the church bombing, which was followed by a series of small bombings or attempted bombings in several Christian areas.

The government has vowed to enforce tight security measures throughout the country until "all terror and sabotage networks are uncovered."

The bombing campaign has caused alarm in Lebanon, par-

ticularly among the influential Christian minority.

It has spread panic among citizens and police receive daily dozens of calls reporting "suspicious objects" in various streets.

Police ban movie

Authorities in the northern city of Tripoli have banned an Egyptian movie mocking Muslim fundamentalists after a plea from a Sunni Muslim leader.

Police on Sunday raided the Rivoli theatre, security sources said, to prevent the debut screening of "The Terrorist," starring the highly popular Egyptian actor Adel Imam.

But cinemas elsewhere in the country continued showing the film about an extremist who sets fire to video shops and attacks a jewelry store and tourist buses, deeming all of society to be against Islamic teachings.

After one attack, he steals

the car of a philosophy profes-

or to escape. He crashes into

another vehicle of a young

woman who takes him home

and treats his injuries, gradually

causing him to reconsider his

hardline views.

A fist fight